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LIMITED WAR STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

AND THE COMMITTEE ON THE GRADUATE DIVISION

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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PREFACE

Limited war, as it has evolved in the contemporary world, poses major problems for those concerned with the development of American foreign policy and military strategy. These problems range across a broad spectrum, from the public opinion aspects of our traditional reluctance to use military power as an instrument of national policy to psychological interactions with an enemy in active conflict. They include such explosive politico-military issues as budget levels and defense organization. The unifying thread for the solutions of these diverse limited war problems is strategy. The degree to which our plans and actions in these different areas squarely meet the problems and yet are complementary to one another is the true measure of the worth and consistency of our limited war strategy.

In the years since World War II the political fact of the east-west confrontation and the technological fact of the nuclear stalemate, both set against the background of a powerful surge for independence in formerly colonial or dominated countries, have combined to raise limited war to a position of near-primacy in practical international relations. So vital has it become that our national survival itself may well depend upon our ability to develop a superior limited war strategy. It is with the evolution of this strategy that this thesis is concerned.

Because the subject is intricately interwoven with general military strategy, foreign policy, and the international situation in the postwar world, and because it would obviously be impossible to treat these broad matters comprehensively in a work such as this, the reader is expected to have a basic familiarity with the principal issues and events in these fields.

It should be stated at the outset that complete objectivity is not, and cannot be, a marked characteristic of this work. As a military officer writing on military strategy my approach could not possibly be completely detached. I have attempted, however, to eliminate considerations of service partisanship, and to avoid one-sided treatments of controversial subjects. The opinions and assertions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of the author, and in no way represent the views of the Navy or the Department of Defense.

I would like to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Professor Martin A. Travis for his unceasing encouragement to a sailor venturing into the unfamiliar seas of scholarship; to Professor Anthony H. Sokol for invaluable advice on content and for patient and painstaking help in improving style and composition; and to Professor Morton A. Kaplan for his kindness in making available a bibliography from his forthcoming work on limited war. The shortcomings of the thesis are, of course, my own.

Robert R. Monroe

Mountain View, California
December, 1961

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Concept, Scope, and Organization

It is one of the paradoxes of our age that in the middle of what Raymond Aron has termed "the century of total war,"[1] when the destructive power of thermonuclear weapons has dwarfed all types of military force heretofore known, limited war should become one of the central issues facing the nation, and the world. Precisely because the new weapons are too terrible to be used rationally as instruments of positive policy, the ascendency of the atom has resurrected the non-total forms of warfare from their former place in the shadows of the world wars and raised them to a position of primacy in the international arena, where they become the focal points both of conflict and of world attention.

Within the last decade, during which time scholars, armchair strategists, and military analysts have been repeatedly discovering and rediscovering limited war,[2] the spate of works on this category

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[1] Raymond Aron, The Century of Total War (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1954).

[2] Prior to World War II, virtually no writers were interested in questions of limited war. Among the very few noteworthy works published were Hoffman Nickerson, Can We Visit War? (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, Co., 1934); and several books and articles by the British military historian and analyst, B. H. Liddell Hart. As will be seen infra, the immediate postwar years were almost as barren.

of conflict has increased exponentially from a mere trickle to flood stage. The great majority of these, however, deal with the intriguing theoretical problems of limited war, such as categories of limitation, specific "watershed" points, communications and bargaining, and escalation dangers. Most of the remainder are concerned with specific confrontations, such as Korea or Indochina. There exists no complete treatment of the evolution of actual limited war strategy of the United States. It is the aim of this thesis to close this gap. In period of time, the study begins with the entry of the United States into the nuclear era in 1945 and traces developments through the beginning of the Berlin-crisis buildup in the fall of 1961. The material is arranged chronologically, with the four main chapters covering the postwar period, Korea, the Eisenhower years, and the Kennedy shift.

Definitions

At the outset it seems desirable to define two terms that are central to this work--"limited war" and "strategy." Both have a wide range of meanings and both have a complex relationship with closely allied expressions which must be understood.

Limited war

There are as many definitions of limited war as there are people who write about it, and the extremes are rather distant from one another. None are "right" or "wrong," but merely more or less adequate for the purpose intended by the writer, and no case is made in this thesis for the "correctness" of the version used. It should be clearly understood, however, that limited war in the context of this paper refers to the conflict *as we see it*. No doubt the Korean war appeared quite thoroughly total to a Korean.

The definition of limited war used in what General Maxwell D. Taylor calls "the strategy-making circles of government" is one of the more restricted ones, and, while it is not adopted herein, it is important that its scope be understood. In this "official" definition (which has possibly been modified in the past year), "general war" is defined as a conflict in which the forces of the United States and those of Soviet Russia come in direct contact, and thus one in which atomic weapons are used at the outset. Limited war is considered to be a conflict short of general war.[3] Without discussing at length the shortcomings of this definition (and its related assumptions), it is apparent that its basic inadequacy stems from the fact that the limitation is one of opponent only, and does not relate to the conflict itself. A much broader, and better, definition holds limited war to be an armed conflict in which the national survival of the United States is not at stake. But this is perhaps too general. Careful analysis of the theory of limitations, upon which our existence may someday well depend, requires that the intricate mechanics through which a war is kept limited be thoroughly understood. If we are to be able to recognize the difference between a level of force that can be safely raised to secure an objective, and one that cannot without bringing on all-out war, our definitions must be as specific as possible.

It is generally agreed by theorists and writers in this field that one of the most significant characteristics of limited war is

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[3] Maxwell D. Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 7-10. See also Hanson W. Baldwin, "Limited war," American Strategy for the Nuclear Age, ed. Walter F. Hahn and John C. Neff (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 251-52.

the limitation on objectives. Some would even consider this the prime element, as in the following example:

> A limited war is a war fought to achieve a limited objective. In the achievement of this objective, a nation may be expected to plan to expend a limited amount of its national resources; and in carrying out the war it may be expected to plan to hold the war to a limited geographical area.[4]

As Bernard Brodie has pointed out, however, such one-sidedness is dangerous because it

> . . . diverts attention from the crucial fact that the restraint necessary to keep wars limited is primarily a restraint on means, not ends. . . . We should be willing to limit objectives <u>because</u> we want to keep the war limited, and not the other way round.[5]

A more balanced definition would seem to bring in two additional forms of limitation, those of weapons and those of geography, at a level only slightly subordinate to that of objectives. A host of other categories <u>could</u> be added, such as limitations on number of belligerents, on targets, on degree of commitment of human and

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[4] From the official program of a "Seminar of Capabilities and Techniques of American Armament for Limited War," held under the auspices of the American Finance Association in New York, December 4, 1957. Quoted in Bernard Brodie, <u>Strategy in the Missile Age</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 311. Henry A. Kissinger adheres closely to this same line. He maintains that limited war "is fought for specific political objectives which, by their very existence, tend to establish a relationship between the force employed and the goal to be attained." See his <u>Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy</u> (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 140. Likewise Robert Endicott Osgood, in his definitive work on limited war, states: "there is one characteristic of overriding importance in distinguishing among wars: the nature of the objectives for which the belligerents fight. The decisive limitation upon war is the limitation of the objectives of war." <u>Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 4.

[5] Brodie, <u>Strategy in the Missile Age</u>, pp. 312-13.

physical resources, on duration of fighting, and on tempo,[6] but these tend to make the definition too complex to be useable in practical application. By considering objectives, weapons, and geography as the three main categories of limitations, an understanding of limited war emerges that is sufficiently precise to be significant for purposes of national policy formation and military strategy development, and sufficiently broad to be applicable over a wide portion of the spectrum of conflict. An expansion of one of these three categories of limitations does not necessarily presage automatic escalation to general war. Thus the term "limited war," as used by the United States, would include a conflict in which the weapons limit was lifted through the use of some few thermonuclear weapons in limited retaliation,[7] or one in which the geographic limit was expanded to include a non-nuclear struggle covering virtually all of Europe, although probably not to the full scale of World War II. It is a bitter, but true, footnote to the hydrogen age that such conflicts would now fall in the "limited" category.

By adopting a definition of limited war as one in which the objectives of both sides, the weapons employed, and the geographic area involved are generally subject to limitations, we achieve a

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[6] See, e.g., William W. Kaufmann, "Limited Warfare," Military Policy and National Security, ed. William W. Kaufmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), pp. 102-09; and Osgood, Limited War, pp. 1-4.

[7] For discussions of this aspect of limited war see Morton A. Kaplan, The Strategy of Limited Retaliation, Policy Memorandum No. 19 (Princeton: Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1958); and Glenn H. Snyder, Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 183-219, et passim. Both works reference a number of other sources.

workable compromise which permits the expansion of one or possibly two elements so long as total escalation does not occur. This admittedly gives the term a broad connotation, but it best suits the purpose of this study, and any narrower definition achieves less utility in practical application.[8]

The fact that a wide meaning is adopted here, however, does not make any less hazy the line between limited and general war--the grey zone of division between the two has been raised, not clarified. Oskar Morgenstern well treats the matter:

> We have a general idea of when a war is "limited" and when it is not. But we cannot state precisely the point in the whole gamut of different forms of violence where a war stops being limited and begins to be unrestricted. Mathematical rigor in these areas is not to be expected.
> . . . .
> Even though the notion of limitation lacks in precision no one will fail to see a significant difference between a complete thermonuclear exchange between two countries or groups of countries and an action like that in Korea, or Indochina--or the difference between the last World War and the war in Korea.[9]

Having established the upper boundary of limited war, as seen by the United States, at a level just short of thermonuclear holocaust, a word should be said of the lower limit. In this study, it is regarded as extending down the cold war spectrum, through guerrilla and partisan action (sometimes termed unconventional or sublimited warfare), to a point slightly below the shooting level. Again the division is an indistinct one. The Berlin airlift of 1948

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[8] A good case could be made for the vital necessity of a redefinition and grouping of types of conflict into several broad categories. This, however, would be an exercise in theory, not suited to this attempt to chronicle and connect actual strategy evolution.

[9] Oskar Morgenstern, The Question of National Defense (New York: Random House, 1959), pp. 137-38.

and the landings in Lebanon in 1958 are considered as qualifying as forms of limited war, while other less-overt, more-psychological, confrontations are excluded.

Strategy

The problem of developing an adequate definition is even more difficult when one comes to strategy than it was in the matter of limited war. This is true not only because of the less-concrete nature of strategy, but also because recent usage of the term in the common idiom has expanded it almost beyond usefulness. It has been employed to describe matters ranging from the broadest possible sweep of things military to the narrowest deployment of troops. There is no intention here to engage in an exercise in semantics--defining in exact scope all variants of strategy--or to expound at length on the fine correlations between them. Volumes could be, and have been, written on this.[10] But it is necessary, in view of the widely varied usage of the term, to describe generally what it connotes herein.

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[10]The classic work, that has withstood the test of time for more than a century and a quarter, is, of course, Karl von Clausewitz, On War [1830], trans. O. J. Matthijs Jolles (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1950). For more recent extensive discussions of strategy see Bernard Brodie, "Strategy as a Science," American Military Policy: Strategic Aspects of World Political Geography, ed. Edgar S. Furniss, Jr. (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1947), pp. 101-14; Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, pp. 7-156; Gordon A. Turner, "Classic and Modern Strategic Concepts," National Security in the Nuclear Age: Basic Facts and Theories, ed. Gordon A. Turner and Richard D. Challener (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), pp. 3-30; and Richard B. Foster, "Values, Power, and Strategy," in Kahn and Neff, pp. 173-87. The best treatment of the development of strategy is Edward Mead Earle (ed.), Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944).

In discussing strategy, it is probably best to approach it from above. At the highest level are our national values--human, moral, religious, cultural--which, through the framework of public opinion (as interpreted and expressed by political leaders), prescribe our national goals. Subordinate to these, but also through the political process, national policies are decided upon which determine, in general outline, the methods by which our goals will be reached. To carry out the national policy and reach the national goals, a grand strategy (or national strategy) is formulated. This, in general terms, is a master plan for the use of the political, diplomatic, economic, military, and psychological power of the nation. Within each one of these subdivisions a hierarchy similar to the above exists. Thus, at this lower level, military policy is decided upon to establish, in broad outline, the methods by which the military objectives of the grand strategy will be reached. To execute the designated military policy, military strategy is then worked out, setting forth the plans of action for the attainment of the objectives. When this becomes institutionalized and widely understood it is often referred to as strategic doctrine. Finally, at the lowest level, military tactics encompasses the actual carrying out of the plans set by military strategy.[11]

Having defined military strategy in relation to allied terms, a few words should now be said in expansion of the definition, to clarify usage in this work. First, the upper border of military

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[11] Some theorists would place the category of operations--the marshaling of means to carry out plans--between strategy and tactics. This is the Soviet practice, and is similar to grand tactics in French military thought. It is not used in this paper because this concept has not been officially sanctioned through military usage in the United States.

strategy--the dividing line between military policy and military strategy--is a hazy one indeed. No purpose would be served here by attempting an arbitrary clarification, as the one can well be regarded as shading into the other. Hereafter, when the term "strategy" is used alone, it refers to military strategy. Also, as used herein, the word refers to the broad, long-term plan of action designed to secure long-term ends, not the more specific military strategies dealing with the conduct of a single campaign. Thus, for example, military posture--troops, equipment, weapons--can be regarded as a tangible indication of strategy, for it constitutes the manpower and hardware needed to carry out the plan.

Moving now to "limited war strategy," the central theme of this work, the term is used to connote those aspects of our military strategy that relate to limited war--in essence, the broad national plan for the use of limited war to secure the objectives of our military policy. As such, the plan encompasses not only the tangible might to be used in limited war--its formation, organization, training, and equipping--but the method of its application as well, including such things as the use of the various branches of the services, the decisions on weapons employment, and the operation of the limitations concept. It is obvious that some of these areas impinge directly or indirectly upon military policy and grand strategy. This does not indicate that they are improperly categorized here, but only that the interrelationships are complex, the dividing lines indistinct, and that the decisions on limited war strategy must be made within the frame of reference established by policy. Because of this interaction, some aspects of limited

war strategy treated herein may lie partially in the policy field, or may have ramifications that do.

Theory of Limited War

There are, paradoxically, almost no limits to a discussion of the theory of limited war. As theory is not the central theme of this work, however, the subject will be treated here in very brief manner; those wishing elaboration will find no lack of material elsewhere.[12] From the point of view of its unifying theory, limited war is essentially a simple concept. It is based on the proposition that an active conflict can be kept to some level below the ultimate if both sides wish to keep it so, and that both sides will wish to keep it so if the penalty for escalation is greater than the gain to be derived by it.

Many argue that the theory is meaningless; that neither side would be willing to accept defeat without first employing all the weapons, force, and resources at its disposal. Hence they see inevitable incremental escalation until general war is reached. This argument misses the central point of limited war--that, by definition, a basic issue such as national survival is not at stake. The losing side in a limited war could scarcely fail to weigh the

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[12] Some few "basic" works may be mentioned here. Two of the earliest (and still among the best) discussions are Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, and Osgood, Limited War. For a brilliant, pioneering work in the field of bargaining, communications, and strategy (in the sense of theory of games) see Thomas C. Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). An excellent recent brief treatment can be found in Henry A. Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), chap. iii. The work most central to this idea is Morton H. Halperin's forthcoming book The Theory of Limited War.

painful, but relatively small, cost of defeat in this contest against the supreme national catastrophe that general war would represent, regardless of who "won." This is not to say that keeping a war limited is a simple matter. Emotionalism, lack of communications, accident, and a host of other causes make it extremely difficult--but it *is* possible. The very fact that a limited war takes place indicates a desire on both sides to avoid a final showdown, and recent history is replete with an overlapping succession of conflicts that have begun, continued, and ended without significant escalation. Nor have all ended in stalemates. The Soviet Union suffered a clear setback in the Greek Civil War without increasing her commitment, while the United States acquiesced in the loss of North Vietnam without unleashing major increments of military power that were poised and ready.

A point of vital importance in limited war theory is that restraint is required not only by the vanquished but by the victor as well. At the outset of the struggle the war aims must be exactly defined and clearly communicated to the enemy. "A war of fuzzy, ill-defined, or unlimited aims encourages unlimited means."[13] "Victory" must be defined in terms of political objectives, rather than fixing upon the traditional military goal of unconditional surrender. In the words of Henry A. Kissinger, the constraints in limited war must "attempt to *affect* the opponent's will, not to *crush* it, to make the conditions to be imposed seem more attractive than continued resistance, to strive for specific goals and not for complete annihilation."[14] Once the political goal is achieved,

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[13] Baldwin, in Hahn and Neff, p. 254.

[14] Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, p. 141.

the almost overwhelming pressures to expand the conflict and inflict upon the enemy a more decisive defeat must be steadfastly resisted.

It is readily apparent that the indispensable elements of a limited war strategy are the firm Clausewitzian control of the military by the political, avoidance of the emotional aura of crusade, maintenance of communications and diplomatic contact with the enemy, and development of a coherent, flexible theory of limitations. A major aim of this strategy must be to slow down the tempo of war, to enforce pauses in which diplomacy can function, and to insert as many steps as possible between any given level of conflict and general war.

It is obvious from this discussion that many of our traditional predispositions concerning war will have to be changed if we are to engage in limited conflicts successfully.[15] It should be equally obvious that a new type of strategic thinking will be required.

> So long as we consider limited war as an aberration from the "pure" case of all-out war we will not be ready to grasp its opportunities, and we will conduct the wars we do fight hesitantly and ambiguously, oscillating between the twin temptations to expand them (that is, to bring them closer to our notion of what war should be like), or to end them at the first enemy overture.[16]

What is needed is not an offshoot or an amalgamation, but a new concept--a true limited war strategy. It is with the growing pains of this strategy that this thesis is concerned.

This is not a peripheral issue or an aspect of defense that would be "nice to have." It is a matter of central importance to

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[15] This point is discussed in greater detail, infra.

[16] Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, p. 145.

our survival as a nation. Limited war is ever more rapidly becoming the basic form of conflict of our age, and fundamental to success in limited war is an understanding of its nature and the development of a sound strategy for it. Time and again in the history of arms, victory has gone to those who have broken the mold of that which had been taken for granted, seized the initiative in strategic interpretation of technological advances, and confronted the enemy with a truly revolutionary military strategy--even though the power and resources of the victor may have been inferior. The future of the West in the cold war seems likely to depend in large measure on our ability to formulate such a strategy for limited war.

Limited War in History

Limited war, in spite of its recent prominence, is not a modern development. Even among great powers, history reveals many more limited wars than general wars. Through the eighteenth century, wars were generally limited by the inability of a monarch to bring more than a small fraction of the potential power of his state to bear.[17] In the nineteenth century, because of the rise of people's armies following the French Revolution and the greater destructive capability arising from the industrial revolution, lack of *will* replaced lack of *capability* as the greatest factor in keeping wars limited.[18] That this acted as an effective restraint

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[17] For an excellent discussion of the use of restraint in war through history see John U. Nef, *War and Human Progress: An Essay on the Rise of Industrial Civilization* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

[18] Osgood has developed a perceptive comparison and contrast of the limited wars of two significant periods in history--that from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 to the French Revolutionary War, and that from the Congress of Vienna in 1815 to World War I-- in *Limited War*, chap. iv.

can be seen in the limited nature of such conflicts as the Crimean War (1853-56), the Austro-Sardinian War (1859), the war of Prussia and Austria against Denmark (1864), the Austro-Prussian War (1866), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), the Russo-Turkish War (1877), and the Spanish American War (1898). The conflicts of this century are, in general, much more instructive to us today, as we attempt to develop the theoretical basis of limited war, than were the conflicts of earlier ages, for in the nineteenth century diplomatic skill was a major factor in the limitation process.

Even in the twentieth century, marked by the two of the most terrible wars in all history, limited war has been the rule rather than the exception. The years before World War I saw the Boer War (1899-1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), and the Balkan Wars (1912-13); and prefacing World War II in the 1930s were the Japanese war in Manchuria, the Italian war against Ethiopia, and the Spanish Civil War.

But if much can be learned from a study of limited wars of the past, the equation of limitation in our world today has been drastically changed from that involved in the cited conflicts, and, as will be developed in the next chapter, some entirely new variables are now present.

American Resistance to Limited War

Before beginning a study of actual evolution of limited war strategy in the United States, it is desirable first to establish a proper frame of reference by examining the American approach to

war.[19] This is a matter of particular significance, for the very concept of limited war runs counter to many of our basic predispositions and to our strongest traditions in foreign and military policy.[20]

Some of these derive from the geopolitical fact of our oceanic isolation. The long-enduring feeling of security which this remoteness engendered enabled us to ignore the precepts of Realpolitik and to remain aloof from the intricate interweavings of political management of power which so marked European diplomacy. Thus we developed not only a distaste for, but an actual distrust of, power politics, and in our best isolationist manner we tended in international relations to divorce diplomacy from its ultimate basis--force. In complete rejection of the dicta of Clausewitz, we took a dichotomous view of war and peace. Thus in peacetime, foreign policy has traditionally been formed with little regard for military considerations, and in time of war the determining objective has been the obtaining of a clear-cut military victory. A view more antithetical to limited war would be hard to find. In this unique type of conflict, the very essence of the problem is the close, two-way relationship between political objectives and military force. One must always be considered in terms of the other, as though they were the two sides of the limited

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[19] Among the many detailed treatments of American attitudes about war, two outstanding ones are James David Atkinson, The Edge of War (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953), chap. i; and Osgood, Limited War, chap. ii. Some of the ideas expressed in this section are derived therefrom.

[20] No assertion is made herein that the characteristics discussed are elements of a unique "national character" of Americans. They should be regarded as cultural traits of a more or less temporary nature, verifiable by scientific observation, and explainable by historical fact.

war coin. Another legacy of our lack of understanding of the intimate tie between power and policy has been the carry-over into our international outlook of the American penchant for quick, clear-cut results to the short-term aspects of any problem. Impatient with delay, tending to see everything in terms of black or white, we find it very difficult as a nation to accept the necessity for frustrating stalemates (when the political objective so demands) and to strive for possibly obscure long-term objectives rather than attractive but deceptive immediate results.

A second major predisposition of the American people, which has become a severe handicap in this age of limited war, is our moral aversion to violence. Having its basis in Christianity and the Western liberal tradition, this national trait causes us to deprecate the use of power as a means of conflict resolution. We idealistically regard reason, truth, justice, and universal legal principles as the proper basis for the pacific settlement of disputes, and shrink in profound distaste from the use of military force as an instrument of national power. From this has sprung our anti-militarist tradition, our fear of standing armies as a threat to democratic liberties, our distrust of military counsel in time of peace, and our demand that the uniformed leaders not impinge upon the policy process. A modification in these basic attitudes is a prerequisite to national effectiveness in an age when the dividing line between policy and strategy, always indistinct, has virtually disappeared entirely, and the politico-military field has become all-important.

Deriving from our emotional aversion to violence, our hatred of war, is another basic character trait which is even more

incompatible with limited war than those discussed above. This is our tendency, once involved in war, to become polarized to the extreme with fervent and righteous zeal, determined to crush completely the evil forces that brought on this social aberration and to return the world to its "normal" situation--peace--with all possible speed.

> Democracy fights in anger--it fights for the very reason that it was forced to go to war. It fights to punish the power that was rash enough and hostile enough to provoke it--to teach that power a lesson it will not forget, to prevent the thing from happening again.[21]

This ideological crusade upon which we embark, and about which we become deeply serious, will brook no compromise, no truce, no negotiated peace, but instead demands total military victory. If we are to emerge successfully from the era of limited wars now in ascendency we must overcome this predisposition as well as the others.

While the problem of modifying many characteristics of our traditional approach to war is a big one, it does not appear overwhelming. Our attitudes are largely a product of experience, and as we advance into the cold war our experience seems to be radically changing. Our former immunity from attack has been lost to the long-range bomber, the intercontinental ballistic missile, and the missile-launching submarine. Our isolationist impulses and non-entanglement policies have given way to near-complete immersion in world affairs, highlighted by an intricate web of interlocking defense commitments. We have survived a host of limited war situations, learning from each vital lessons concerning

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[21] George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 65-66.

the realities of this new age. These experiences are gradually transforming our attitude toward war, as the following chapters attest. Our traditional dissociation of diplomacy from force and our deprecation of power politics no longer appear to be immutable laws of nature, standing forever inviolate. In the face of a rapidly maturing public opinion, there appears to be hope that inspired and intelligent leadership can complete the transformation of the American approach to war to one that is compatible with the unfolding era of limited conflict.

Limitations of Thesis

Before proceeding further, a word should be said concerning the difficulties inherent in developing any study of strategy--difficulties which, even under the best of circumstances, render any such work inadequate to some degree.

First, since the subject itself is not a concrete one, it is difficult for any but the most experienced military analyst and writer to treat it coherently. Strategy is elusive in the extreme, much of it unwritten, some of it not formulated beyond the abstract assumption level even in the highest circles of government. Even in future ages, when all official papers of the current period have long-since been released, scholars will not be able to produce from the archives a document reading: 'This was our strategy: . . .'

Thus a writer presumptuous enough to venture into this dimly lighted and indistinctly bounded field must assess attitudes and actions, speeches and policy statements, Congressional testimony and documents, budgets and laws, tangible forces and hardware, the temper of public opinion and the writings of perceptive observers,

and any other indications he can ferret out, mix these with a generous measure of speculation, project the whole against the background of the world situation as he interprets it, and attempt to arrive at coherent conclusions.

Complicating this effort is the fact that a large proportion of the pertinent material is of a classified nature and therefore unavailable to this study.[22] Because of this it is quite likely that some conclusions are incorrect and that some seeming inconsistencies in strategy may only be illusions arising from lack of knowledge.

Likewise a measure of distortion is necessarily introduced by the very nature of the topic here under discussion. Since this work deals with only one aspect of our overall military strategy--that concerned with limited war--the reader must be aware that a one-sidedness is thereby imparted to the thesis which is not present in actuality. This can easily be offset through study of any of the host of balanced works on contemporary military strategy as a whole.[23]

Lest this categorization of limitations discourage the reader, let it be said that there are positive factors as well at work in the strategy field which a writer need only recognize in order to utilize. A major assistance is the fact that in a democracy such as ours the formulation of most of the broad issues of strategy (and many of the minor ones) is accomplished, or at least discussed, in public debate. Also, in many cases, strategy

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[22] It should be stated at this point that no classified material has been used in the preparation of this thesis.

[23] See bibliography, infra.

appears to some extent to be the dependent, rather than the independent, variable--being molded around the weapons, equipment, and manpower levels that the people, through the Congress, are willing to provide.

Balancing all factors it would seem that a useful end is served by carefully researched strategic reviews by laymen, for often true strategy will emerge, and, seen in broad perspective from a detached viewpoint, may prove inconsistent, incomplete, inadequate, or incorrect in some aspects.

With this brief word of caution concerning the dangers inherent in any strategy assessment, an examination will now be made of the evolution of limited war strategy of the United States.

CHAPTER II

GENESIS OF A NEW CONCEPT, 1945-1950

Limited War in the Atomic Age

On July 16, 1945, with the first explosion of an atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico, the concept of limited war began a revolutionary transformation. Wars of the past had, in many instances, certainly been limited, as was discussed above,[1] but in those cases the basic limitation involved, for whatever reason, was one of effort. In the nuclear age, limited war could possibly be more accurately referred to as "restrained war." Limitation of effort, as in the historic sense of lack of incentive, or lack of resources to be committed to the struggle, is not involved. As Bernard Brodie has written:

> Today, on the contrary, we speak of limited war in a sense that connotes a deliberate hobbling of a tremendous power that is already mobilized and that must in any case be maintained at a very high pitch of effectiveness, for the sake only of inducing the enemy to hobble himself to like degree.[2]

American recognition of this significant shift in emphasis was slow in coming, and the development of a coherent strategy of limited war, as an integral part of national policy, lagged even more. An attempt will be made in this chapter to trace the evolution of the limited war idea in official United States policy from the

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[1] See chap. i, *supra*.

[2] Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, p. 311.

beginning of the atomic age to the outbreak of the Korean War, showing the major psychological and material roadblocks that hampered its development, and identifying the embryonic vestiges that survived.

Apart from the basic, underlying, American antipathy to the concept of limited war that was examined earlier,[3] the events of the post-war years themselves, as they transpired both in this country and abroad, seemed to militate against the formation of a workable limited war strategy. This is not to say that such a strategy could not have evolved, but that the environment was not conducive to the nurturing and growth of such a strange seed in the soil of official Washington.

Foreign Policy Background, 1945-1946

While the long slide into the cold war had undoubtedly begun well before the end of the Second World War, and was so recognized by Russia,[4] no consensus on this existed in Washington. Although there were some few voices in the United States that urged caution, pointing out dangerous trends in Soviet conduct, innate American idealism and the optimism born of wartime cooperation of the Grand Alliance caused official policy in the early postwar period to be based on the organization of a world structure for permanent peace.[5] With the prospect of Big Three unity standing

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[3] See Chap. i, *supra*.

[4] J. L. Gaddis dates the beginning of the cold war, in its narrow connotation, from early 1945, when it became clear to the Politburo that Stalingrad would hold. *The United States in the World Arena: An Essay in Recent History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), p. 141.

[5] William Reitzel, Morton A. Kaplan, and Constance G. Coblenz, *United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1955* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1956), pp. 83-84.

solidly behind the new United Nations, power politics was gladly set aside in favor of cooperative and collective action.

Disillusionment, however, was not long in arriving, at least in official circles. The Soviet Union, by its actions, soon left no doubt that its basic expansionist objectives were to be achieved by forceful unilateral action, accompanied by disruption of the international system. Joint control procedures in former enemy states were virtually blocked by the Soviets; peace treaty negotiations were stalemated time and again; communist regimes were either maintained or installed in the countries of eastern Europe (except Czechoslovakia); Turkey and Iran were the objects of direct pressure; unification was denied in Korea; a huge active Soviet military structure was maintained; obstructionism in the United Nations prevented agreement or action on any important international issue in which the Soviet Union had an interest; the Baruch Plan for the international control of atomic energy was rejected; and in scores of other actions Soviet intransigence was manifested. By the end of 1945, while Big Three unity and international cooperation through the United Nations were still the twin cornerstones of American foreign policy,[6] policy makers "were exploring contingent policies for protecting the United States against the possible failure of this effort."[7]

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[6] President Truman's declaration, in his State of the Union message of January 1946, that ". . . lasting peace requires genuine understanding and active cooperation among the most powerful nations," is typical of the official policy of the time. See U. S., Department of State, Bulletin, XIV, No. 344 (February 3, 1946), 170. This publication is cited hereafter as State Department Bulletin, with date.

[7] Neitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, pp. 85-86.

Through 1946, although United States foreign policy sought what Goitzel, Kaplan, and Goblenz have termed the "middle ground" between the tough and the soft lines,[8] the trend was unmistakable. In March 1946, at Fulton, Missouri, the great voice of Winston Churchill openly sounded the alarm with his famous "iron curtain" speech, and urged a western power grouping to oppose the Soviet threat.[9] As negotiations with Russia repeatedly failed, and the Communist takeover in Eastern Europe was consolidated by "salami"[10] tactics, tension increased and bipolarity began to characterize the international system.

By early 1947, certainly a pivotal year in American history, our policy with respect to Russia had hardened to the point where President Truman, in marked contrast to the tenor of his statement of just one year earlier,[11] proclaimed in his State of the Union message in January:

> We live in a world in which strength on the part of peaceloving nations is still the greatest deterrent to aggression. World stability can be destroyed when nations with great responsibilities neglect to maintain the means of discharging those responsibilities.
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> This is an age when unforeseen attack could come with unprecedented speed. We must be strong enough to defeat, and thus to forestall, any such attack . . . . When a system of collective security under the United Nations has been established, we

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[8] Ibid., pp. 91-94.

[9] The address, "Alliance of English Speaking People," can be found in Vital Speeches of the Day, March 15, 1946, pp. 329-32. For a perceptive analysis, see Goitzel, Kaplan, and Goblenz, pp. 89-90.

[10] A term used by Rakosi, Stalin's agent in Hungary, to describe the progressive reduction of non-communist elements in Eastern Europe.

[11] See note 6, supra.

> shall be willing to lead in collective disarmament, but, until such a system becomes a reality, we must not again allow our weakness to invite attack.[12]

This toughening of American policy, and the almost universal distrust of Russia that accompanied it, became the starting points for the determination of American foreign policy in the years that followed. Also recognized by our decision makers as being a central fact of these early postwar years was the inability of Europe to reestablish the balance of power that had prevented one-power domination for so long. Active participation of the United States was seen as an absolute requisite.

Military Policy, 1945-1946

Against the above background of the international situation as seen by Washington, it is possible to trace some of the main currents of American military policy and strategy. While every effort has been made to orient the subject matter as closely as possible to the topic of limited war, it is necessary, particularly in the early years, to include some general military policy, in an effort to show why a limited war strategy was needed, what the alternatives to it were, and why the decisions were made as they were.

The overriding fact of the military scene in the immediate postwar era was the atomic bomb--we had it, Russia did not. It affected all military thinking and permeated every planning level. Yet there was no agreement, nor even the beginnings of one, as to what the effect of this "ultimate weapon" on military strategy

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[12] Later published in State Department Bulletin, January 19, 1947, pp. 124-25.

would be. As Lieutenant General James M. Gavin has written:

> Hiroshima was fresh in our minds, the Soviets had no atomic bomb and no immediate prospect of getting one, and a revolution in military technology suddenly was being thrust upon us. To some extent, military thinking seemed to be paralyzed by the bomb, and the lessons of World War II were ignored or quickly forgotten. The prevailing attitude seemed to be that after Hiroshima it was time to "throw the books out the window." Military texts had to be rewritten. Little that we had learned in World War II, it was said, would have meaningful application in the future.[13]

The same theme can be seen in what General Maxwell D. Taylor describes as the "Great Fallacy," glimpsed by him and General Patton on being informed of the existence of the atomic bomb, "that henceforth the use or threatened use of atomic weapons of mass destruction would be sufficient to assure the security of the United States and its friends."[14]

While the atomic bomb, and the confusion over its significance and applications, were overriding factors, and more disruptive than uniting ones, there was little military agreement among the services even outside the atomic sphere. As Walter Millis has stated: "Each of the three services . . . emerged from the conflict with its own plans for the future. No one of the plans was correlated with the other two."[15] Yet the reasons for the failure of the top planners to arrive at a workable strategy are so deep and far reaching as to make one wonder that any viable pattern at all was maintained.

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[13] James M. Gavin, War and Peace in the Space Age (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 92.

[14] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, p. 4.

[15] Walter Millis, Arms and Men: A Study in American Military History (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1956), p. 307.

these reasons can be grouped, with some overlap, into three main categories, analyzed in the below paragraphs.

The first and most basic handicap had to do with the overall conception of what United States strategy should be designed to do, i.e., what kind of a war we should prepare for. On this there was more consensus than on most other points, and if history is any guide, this consensus was not too accurate. With Russia clearly marked as the major, if not only, threat, and with the example of a recent "total" war fresh in mind, major efforts at shaping new military policy and strategy were formed around the prospect of World War III.[16] The concept of limited war was little understood and severely subordinated. Books on military strategy of this period, as well as articles published in newspapers, popular magazines, and the journals of learned societies almost without exception reflect the planners' preoccupation with total war and the embryonic "air-atomic" strategy. Those few perceptive authors with an extensive grasp of military history were able to visualize what is presently termed a limited war,[17] but these went almost

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[16] More is developed on this subject, infra.

[17] See, e.g., Bernard Brodie, "The Weapon: Implications for Military Policy," The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order, ed. Bernard Brodie (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1946), pp 83-85; Bernard Brodie, The Atomic Bomb and American Security, Memorandum No. 18 (New Haven: Yale Institute of International Studies, 1945, mimeographed), p. 9, et passim; P. M. S. Blackett, Fear, War, and the Bomb: Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy (New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1948), pp. 73ff.; Hanson W. Baldwin, "U.S. Defense Problem," New York Times, July 19, 1945, p. 8; B. H. Liddell Hart, The Revolution in Warfare (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1946), p. 85; and B. H. Liddell Hart, "War, Limited," Harper's Magazine, CXCIII, No. 1150 (March, 1946), 193-203.

unnoticed in the flood of "ultimate weapon, total war" literature with such alarming titles as "No Place to Hide."

A second factor acting as a drawback to the attainment of a realistic nuclear age military strategy involved the control of atomic energy. Here our decision-makers found themselves between the horns of an impossible dilemma. On the one hand the developing military picture was clearly being based, beyond all possibilities of modification, on nuclear weapons. The sole possession of the atomic bomb served "to create in 1945 and 1946 an illusion of military strength which seemed to justify a rapid disarmament in conventional armed forces."[18] Demobilization was proceeding at such a pace[19] that it was obvious that atomic weapons were all we would have left to fight with. On the other hand, the official commitment of the government to the abolition of atomic weapons was so firm[20] that they could not publicly be spoken of as the keystone of our

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[18] P. M. S. Blackett, Atomic Weapons and East-West Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), p. 68.

[19] Discussed in the next subsection, infra.

[20] President Truman, in his message to Congress of October 3, 1945, had stated: "The hope of civilization lies in international arrangements looking, if possible, to the renunciation of the use and development of the atomic bomb, and directing and encouraging the use of atomic energy . . . toward peaceful and humanitarian ends." See his Memoirs, vol. I: Year of Decisions (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), p. 532. Subsequent government study and action had resulted in a United Nations declaration of November 1945 recommending the establishment of a commission to deal with the problems of atomic energy and weapons, and in the Baruch Plan, of June 1946, based on the Acheson-Lilienthal report. See Robert Strausz-Hupé and Stefan T. Possony, International Relations: In the Age of the Conflict between Democracy and Dictatorship (1st ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1950), pp. 597-627, for a well-organized discussion of the development of the United States position on atomic energy control in 1945-1946.

defense effort.[21] To do so would not only compromise our disarmament negotiations in the United Nations, and pillory the United States in world public opinion, but might also harden national public opinion against giving up what would be regarded as our last defense, even if an agreement with Russia were possible. This dilemma of the military strategists cut both ways; planning based on nuclear weapons might have to be junked, but it was difficult, when nuclear disarmament seemed such a slim hope, to plan for conventional warfare only. When it is considered that this was no trivial unknown factor, for which contingent plans could be made, but a matter of such sweeping importance that it struck to the very foundations of the military structure, its full contribution to the confusion of our strategic posture can be appreciated. Complicating the issue was the related public controversy over whether the United States should share its atomic secrets with the Soviets or retain them for military defense, although the former position was apparently never strongly considered at top government levels.[22]

The third and perhaps greatest handicap to the formulation of a coherent military strategy in the immediate postwar years was the press of current military issues which generated such heat and smoke as to obscure the more basic problem. Yet it may be a mistake to regard these as peripheral issues, for certainly two of them at least, demobilization and unification, were of such importance that their resolution was a prerequisite to the development of a nuclear age strategy.

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[21] Millis, Arms and Men, p. 307.

[22] Truman, I, 523-29.

Demobilization

With the announcement of VE Day, the cry of "bring the boys home" set in motion a demobilization that snowballed to such vast and uncontrolled proportions after VJ Day that it almost liquidated America's basic military structure[23] and undermined the bases of American diplomacy.[24] The "point system"[25] under which demobilization was accomplished, while being relatively fair and impartial in discharging first those who had contributed the most, nevertheless cut disastrously into the bone and muscle of our forces at a time when America's global responsibilities were still huge.[26] Active-duty military personnel totals dropped from over twelve million in mid-1945 to about 1.6 million in mid-1947.[27] A rate of more than 25,000 discharges per day was reached by the Army in January 1946,[28] but Congressional pressure for even faster action was unrelenting.[29] Yet these statistics can't begin to describe the effects of this headlong stampede. In the Army, General George C. Marshall spoke of being pressed, when in Moscow, to "give the Russians hell," when the Army's sole facilities for giving them hell were one and

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[23]Millis, Arms and Men, p. 310.

[24]Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, p. 17?.

[25]See L. Joseph Bernardo and Eugene H. Bacon, American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Military Service Publishing Co., 1?5?) pp. 442-45, and Gavin, pp. 105-07, for concise summaries of the operation of the point system.

[26]Gavin, p. 105.

[27]Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, p. 25?.

[28]Truman, I, 507-08.

[29]Weitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, pp. 48-49.

one-third divisions over the entire United States, at a time when the Russians had over 260 divisions.[30] The Navy had large numbers of active fleet ships which could not go to sea because of lack of competent personnel.[31] Effective combat air groups of the Air Force were reduced from 218 at the end of 1945 to two in early 1947.[32] The demobilization was castigated at many levels, from President Truman, who spoke of it as "disintegration . . . frenzied demobilization,"[33] to the Cabinet, who saw it as "most inadvisable,"[34] to the military, who with their closer involvement, characterized it as "shocking and wrong,"[35] and "shameful . . . disgraceful,"[36] to such perceptive observers of the politico-military scene as Walter Millis, who described it as "reckless dismantling" with "paralyzing consequences,"[37] yet public and Congressional pressure was irresistible.

While much has been written about the impact of this uncontrolled reduction in weakening our foreign policy and in encouraging Russian expansion, little has been developed concerning

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[30] Weitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, p. 72, citing John C. Sparrow, History of Personnel Demobilization in the United States Army (1951), p. 282.

[31] Walter Millis (ed.), with the collaboration of E. S. Duffield, The Forrestal Diaries (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), p. 136.

[32] Weitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, p. 49.

[33] Truman, I, 509-10.

[34] Millis, Forrestal Diaries, p. 102.

[35] Gavin, p. 106.

[36] Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 157.

[37] Millis, Forrestal Diaries, pp. 89, 107.

its debilitating effect on the development of postwar military strategy. The immediate impact of demobilization upon all levels of command was so great as to almost preclude the detached, searching thought required for the evolution of a new limited war strategy under an atomic umbrella. Thus in an evaluation of the development of this new concept, it is safe to say that the unrelenting efforts required just to keep the military operating through the demobilization period robbed strategy of at least one critical year, possibly two.

Unification

The effects of the unification struggle were even more debilitating. Space precludes giving extensive coverage to all aspects of this absorbing subject, and many detailed studies have already been made,[38] but there are some facets that must be developed as bearing directly on the evolution of limited war strategy. In retrospect, the genesis of the limited war vs. massive retaliation controversy can be seen in the battle lines that were drawn for unification--balanced forces vs. strategic air power.

The air power concept, which could be said to have been born with Italian General Giulio Douhet,[39] was carefully nurtured by the

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[38] The best readily available works on this subject are Millis, Forrestal Diaries, passim, for a cabinet member's views of the struggle as it developed; and Walter Millis, with Harvey C. Mansfield and Harold Stein, Arms and the State: Civil-Military Elements in National Policy (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1958), pp. 133-94, for a perceptive analysis with the benefit of hindsight. See also Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. II: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1956), pp. 46-52.

[39] Giulio Douhet, The Command of the Air [1921], trans. Dino Ferrari (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1942), passim.

United States Army Air Corps in their lean years prior to World War II. While its validity was not proven during the war,[40] the advent of the atomic bomb seemed to indicate to air power advocates that this strategic theory was now unquestionably supreme. By 1945 the Army Air Corps had achieved *de facto* recognition as a co-equal of the ground Army and the Navy, and theirs was the motive power that forced the unification issue, with the objective of securing for the strategic air power concept (and thus for the Air Force) the dominant position in America's future military structure. While many people at high levels of government--President Truman, Secretary of War Stimson, General Marshall, and others--favored some form of unification for various reasons other than as an avenue to the ascendency of air power,

> . . . the really driving pressure for unification did not come from the wartime experience with inter-service inefficiencies and wastes . . . ; it came from the unanswered claim of the pioneer Army aviators, dating back to 1917, for a commanding position in American military planning. Unification was in fact the Army aviators' one practicable avenue to independence and authority . . . . [It provided] the chance to secure increasing authority over general policy by securing increasing control of the top machinery.[41]

The Navy, led by Secretary James Forrestal, tireless advocate of balanced forces, was cast in the opposition role in this battle that was to rage for three years and beyond, and divert so much precious energy from larger issues. Yet it was not all

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[40] U. S. Strategic Bombing Surveys, Franklin D'Olier, Chairman, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945-1947). See especially, Overall Report (European War), and the reports of the Morale Division, Civil Defense Division, and Overall Economic Effects Division.

[41] Millis, Arms and the State, p. 149.

lost motion. While many of the arguments centered around minor, parochial points, the underlying military policy considerations had to be resolved before further progress could be made in shaping the future of military strategy. It was unfortunate, particularly for the Navy, which came to be identified as negative, traditional, and obstructionist, that the issues should be thus intertwined and obscured, but it would have been disastrous had strategy implications been avoided in the unification struggle.

The most significant point to be fixed upon when reviewing the defense reorganization strife, and one that is often lost sight of, is the wide divergence of strategic ideas. The Army and Air Force were proposing military unification, with a single Chief of Staff and the eventual supremacy of the air power concept. The Navy proposed a higher, more far-reaching form of reorganization, including "the political, diplomatic, industrial and economic factors in defense and foreign policy as well,"[42] but with a somewhat looser military combine, headed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This idea was not original with the Navy; it had been used in rudimentary form during the war by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, and had received unusually concise, logical, well-reasoned development in the Eberstadt Report,[43] commissioned by and submitted to Secretary Forrestal. The key element of the Navy position was the coordination between military strategy and national strategy, an "integration which would relate military policy more

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[42] Ibid., p. 152.

[43] Ferdinand Eberstadt, Unification of War and Navy Departments and Postwar Organization for National Security: A Report to Hon. James Forrestal (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945).

directly to diplomatic and economic policy."[44] While it was not so recognized by observers at the time, this close tie between the political and the military is now seen (after the Truman-MacArthur controversy) as the sine qua non of an effective limited war capability.

The Navy thesis was accepted by President Truman[45] and became the basis of the National Security Act of 1947,[46] which created, inter alia, the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency, and gave statutory recognition to the Joint Chiefs of Staff within a "National Military Establishment."[47]

In analyzing this "Battle of the Potomac," S. E. Morison states, "the battle over unification was conducted with relatively little thought to the character of the national military problems in the post-1945 period--except for a heated but superficial debate on the meaning and limitation of strategic air power."[48] In the light of subsequent events, this seems too harsh a criticism. Had it not been for the Navy's forceful advocacy of the politico-military marriage, and its insistence on not being submerged by the air power concept, our black days in Korea might have been much blacker, and our path today much more confused. As Millis has stated:

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[44] Millis, Arms and Men, p. 312.

[45] Truman, II, 48-49.

[46] Millis, Forrestal Diaries, pp. 64-65.

[47] U. S., Statutes at Large, LXI, Part 1, 495-510.

[48] Morison, The United States in the World Arena, p. 175.

> . . . experience seems only to have confirmed the conclusion that in 1947 neither the tactical nor strategic lessons of the Second War, still less the requirements of the future, had been worked out far enough to permit of a unitary solution. Had a monolithic military system been adopted in 1947, it would hardly have worked well in face of the complex and fluid crises which we were subsequently to confront.[49]

Thus if a coherent strategy, extending to the limited war concept, was not achieved in this dialectic process, at least the battle was not lost on the terrain of unification, and could still be fought again. While the National Security Act was only a first hesitating step along the new road, and didn't result in a military policy that was a model of "clarity, firmness, and adequacy," still "until the passage of the 1947 act it has been virtually impossible to have any policy at all."[50] On balance, however, the unification struggle was a paralyzing hiatus, which "delayed the nation for a year or two in grappling with the already dire state of world affairs."[51]

Other military issues

A number of other military issues muddied the waters in the immediate postwar years and contributed to the strategy confusion. Those that bear on the evolution of a limited war theory will be treated briefly. Accompanying demobilization, and inextricably tangled with it, was the question of Universal Military Training. The ultimate defeat of this measure in Congress, although strongly supported by the President,[52] is a measure of the unwillingness of

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[49] Millis, Arms and Men, p. 313.

[50] Ibid., p. 314.

[51] Millis, Forrestal Diaries, p. 153.

[52] See President Truman's message to Congress of October 22, 1945, and his State of the Union message of January, 1946.

the American people, in this period, to adopt the program best designed to provide the manpower that is the essential element of a limited war capability. The aura of invincibility that permeated the nation which was the sole possessor of the "fire of the gods" was such as to transfer, in the public's mind, military power from the man to the machine. The bomb, at least to the public, was the military answer to any threat.

The official perception of the future of atomic weapons, however, was by no means so uniform. There existed wide splits at the higher levels on a number of vital issues. Who should have custody of these weapons, the Atomic Energy Commission or the military? Should branches of the service other than the Air Force be permitted to have operational control of them, or even use them? In fact, should atomic weapons be used at all in the event of war?[53] The widely divergent views here so blurred the focus of the strategy picture that it was not until 1948 that a relatively clear conception of the nuclear foundations of military power arose. A related complicating factor was the prevailing short-sighted view of the possible military applications of atomic energy. General Gavin has declared: "I know of no one, for the first few years following the war, who questioned that its military use would be exclusively in bombs."[54] Other uses were not even discussed.[55] Atomic energy had first appeared as a "city-buster,"

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[53] Millis, Forrestal Diaries, pp. 493-94, et passim.

[54] Gavin, p. 112.

[55] George C. Reinhardt, American Strategy in the Atomic Age (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), p. 50.

and it was cast indelibly in that role. This handicap undoubtedly had a profound effect on such early planning as could take place in the existing unsettled conditions, tending to the dichotomy of total atomic war or pointless efforts with emasculated conventional forces--an atmosphere not conducive to serious efforts to think through the problems of national defense. The legacy of this "myth of Hiroshima" philosophy can be seen even today, in the almost pathological reaction in some quarters to suggestions concerning the use of tactical atomic weapons in limited war. The Bikini tests of 1947, however, were instrumental in opening up new vistas for military uses of this awesome power, as will be seen later.

In these immediate postwar years there also began the budget conflicts that were to have such an overriding influence on the development of America's military posture. This factor, probably more than any other, has shaped the pattern of our defense and the development of our strategic theories--in fact the history of American military policy in the late 1940's could be traced without too much difficulty from the budget outline. Faced with drastic reductions in appropriations, each service pared its less-essential programs to the bone and defended vigorously its need for what it considered the irreducible minimum. In many cases this cut into the funds earmarked for another branch, and in one case extended to virtually the entire defense budget.[56] In this atmosphere, when almost the very survival of a service was in question, there was

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[56] In commenting on one of Secretary Forrestal's diary entries on a conversation with General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, Walter Millis states: "It all came to a 'question of money'; Vandenberg replied that what money was available should go into strategic air . . ."; Forrestal Diaries, p. 468.

no possibility of maintaining a strategic retaliatory capability and a coherent limited war posture. The latter died before birth under the knife of the budgetary surgeon. The pattern of the coming years is seen most clearly in the drama enacted in late 1946 and early 1947 over the defense budget for fiscal year 1948. The Truman Administration, which had succeeded in slicing defense costs from $44 billion in fiscal year 1946 to slightly more than $14 billion in fiscal year 1947, was now determined to hold the line for the next fiscal year at just over $11 billion.[57] The Republican Eightieth Congress was even more economy-minded, and the treatment they gave the military budget was, in the words of Elias Huzar, "the most thorough--and, for the War Department, one of the most uncomfortable--in the years since 1933."[58] Faced with the dilemma of wanting both security and economy, and recognizing that the United States would not match the huge Soviet ground forces, the defense dollar was split heavily in favor of the Air Force.

> It seems fair to say that the budget for fiscal '48 had the effect of launching the independent Air Force on its career as the dominant element in American military policy. Air Force strategy was, of course, not devised as an economy measure. Yet partly because it seemed economical, thereafter the Air Force was to come first with Congress; increasingly the military policy of the nation was to be framed around the dreadful, and in most situations inapplicable, Air Force concept of "strategic" bombing with mass-destruction weapons.
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> . . . the fiscal '48 budget, representing a collaboration between the Democratic officials of the Truman Budget Bureau and the Republican representatives

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[57] Millis, Arms and the State, p. 198.

[58] Elias Huzar, The Purse and the Sword: Control of the Army by Congress through Military Appropriations, 1933-1950 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. 171.

> in the Congressional committees, much more than any contribution of professional military expertise, set the basic pattern of American military policy which was to rule, substantially, down to June 1950.[59]

Summary, 1945-1946

Considering the first two years of the nuclear age in retrospect in an attempt to discern the thread of an embryonic limited war strategy, one is almost forced to admit failure. Vestiges can be glimpsed, now and again, through the tangle of the major immediate issues, but the general military upheaval of these years was of such magnitude as to preclude any real development in this line. As America advanced into the critical year of 1947, however, the preceding years had witnessed a necessary transition from full mobilization to essentially a peacetime economy; a resolute, if not too assured, step into the atomic era; and a major metamorphosis of the nation's military structure, both internally in its inter-service makeup and externally in its politico-military relations. If 1947 dawned on a strategy and posture that were excessively "atomic-air" oriented, at least a modicum of balance had been retained, and the errors in judgment and lack of vision that had been shown by the policy-makers can be more easily understood and accepted than those of some of their successors in later years.

Containment

The year 1947 can be conveniently regarded as the point of official embarkation of America into the cold war.[60] It was not

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[59] Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 200-201.

[60] The term "cold war" was also christened this year, by Bernard Baruch in a speech at Columbia, South Carolina, on April 16.

an instantaneous shift but rather official and public recognition of the de facto oppositional relationship that had gradually developed since the war, coupled with the charting of new courses to thread the shoals of a bipolar world.

Among the most significant of the developments of 1947 was the unveiling of the strategy of containment as the Administration's basic blueprint for the control of communism. It received its classic exposition in an oft-quoted article "By X" in the July 1947 issue of Foreign Affairs magazine.[61] When the author was quickly identified as George F. Kennan, Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, the article was seized upon as the first clear statement of America's official cold war strategy, developed some months before. As Kennan expressed it:

> The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.
>
> . . . Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world . . . can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvres of Soviet policy . . .[62]

Truman Doctrine

While Kennan's article was the first comprehensive public expression of the containment concept, which in one form or another has dominated subsequent American strategy, a specific application of the idea can be seen some four months earlier in the Truman

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[61] By X [George F. Kennan], "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Foreign Affairs, XXV, No. 4 (July, 1947), 566-82. This article is reproduced in Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950, pp. 107-28. For absorbing background material see excerpts from Kennan's lengthy 1946 dispatch from Moscow in Millis, Forrestal Diaries, pp. 133-40.

[62] [Kennan], Foreign Affairs, XXV, No. 4, 575-76.

Doctrine. The immediate occasion for this policy enunciation was the United States assumption of the burden of aid to Greece and Turkey formerly borne by Britain; however, the overtones that accompanied the specific declaration were clearly of global significance. Stating "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures,"[63] the Truman Doctrine signaled definitively the entry of America into the postwar world arena.[64]

Strategy Confusion in 1947

A considerable amount of confusion has arisen concerning the interrelationship of Kennan's containment policy and the Truman Doctrine. A significant point, often missed, is that Kennan's work, in his personal view, was not intended to be interpreted literally. He did not envisage his "containment" as requiring an automatic military response to every communist aggression; rather, he was, in essence, recommending a flexible strategy of local opposition to aggression as opposed to strategic retaliation.[65] Not only did he have little to do with the preparation of the Truman Doctrine,[66] but, when shown a copy of the almost

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[63]The Truman Doctrine was delivered by the President before a joint session of the Congress on March 12, 1947. It is published in State Department Bulletin, March 23, 1947, pp. 534-37.

[64]For a minutely detailed but eminently readable account of the development of the Truman Doctrine, see Joseph M. Jones, The Fifteen Weeks (February 21 - June 5, 1947)(New York: The Viking Press, 1955).

[65]Osgood, Limited War, p. 294.

[66]Jones, pp. 132-34.

completed draft, "to say that he found objections to it is to put it mildly. He objected strongly both to the tone of the message and the specific action proposed."[67]

Thus most of Walter Lippmann's violent criticisms of what he interpreted to be Kennan's containment policy, which were based on the belief that it would overcommit the United States, would actually be shared by Kennan.[68]

While both of these related ideas, containment and the Truman Doctrine, had as their central point the long-range, long-term opposition to Moscow, Kennan's concept stressed the necessity for a wide range of _means_ of opposition, a complete spectrum, in which limited war played a significant role, whereas President Truman's pronouncement put on record the new United States policy, without delineation of means or discussion of strategy, and went on to its immediate application in Greece and Turkey. By interpretation, therefore, George Kennan emerges as the champion of a limited war strategy in 1947.

Regardless of the intended meanings, however, containment soon became the standard descriptive term for American strategy, and Truman's aid to Greece and Turkey became the prime example, in the public's mind, of containment in action. Economic means were to be given primacy, political means were to be less emphasized, and military means were to be strictly subordinated.[69] That the scope

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[67] _Ibid._, p. 155.

[68] Twelve of Lippmann's critical articles are collected in _The Cold War: A Study in U. S. Foreign Policy_ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947).

[69] Reitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, p. 112.

of this new strategy went beyond the Eastern Mediterranean was soon seen in the Marshall Plan and the Berlin airlift. That it recognized practical limits was exhibited by American policy in China, as Mao Tse-tung slowly gained the upper hand, and in Czechoslovakia, when presented with the fait accompli of the Prague coup d'état.[70]

Yet the acceptance of containment as the nation's grand strategy was not an easy thing for the United States.[71] Its negative, defensive connotations clashed violently with America's traditional forthright, bold, image, as a nation standing above power politics and conducting her foreign relations according to universal moral and legal standards. This traditional America, characterized by a strong, underlying antipathy towards war, when finally forced to enter the fray would do so with all her energies, would seize the initiative in the name of justice and humanity, and would carry the offensive to the enemy until his unconditional surrender. Containment contravenes all these characteristics. We must play the power politics game to the hilt, be quick to react, yet not seek to avenge or punish aggression, but merely preserve the status quo in the power balance. We must content ourselves with coexistence, and not embark on the liberation of enslaved peoples. We must keep a firm Clausewitzian political rein on military action, and repress our crusading zeal. These requirements of this new policy are so contrary to our traditional predispositions that the containment concept, and the strategy of limited war required

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[70] For the official "White Paper" on the evolution of the Truman Administration's China policy, see U. S., Department of State, United States Relations with China: with Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949 (Washington: Department of State, 1949).

[71] Much of the material presented in this paragraph is developed from, or suggested by, Osgood, Limited War, chap. vii.

to execute it, have been received with profound distaste, and their implementation has resulted in frustration and, at times, rejection. So much so, suggests Robert E. Osgood, that the term "containment" has been studiously avoided at official levels, where our policy is dressed in the more elegant term "collective security," conveying the impression that our actions are governed by an impartial concern for international law, and concealing the reality that they stem basically from the national interest.[72] Aside from the emotional repugnance of containment, its material demands struck hard at the American pocketbook, for a complex and all-encompassing strategy designed to meet any and every contingency on the global scene is many times more expensive than a simpler one, such as strategic retaliation.

Yet the question has not been one of whether or not to adhere to containment, but rather how to implement it. Here a vacuum developed that was not filled by Dean Acheson's attempts to explain the Truman Doctrine to Congressional committees, in which he carefully avoided any commitment as to the form future action might take.[73] In short, at this point America had a policy, but not a strategy--a national goal, but not a well-developed plan for the employment of national power to meet this goal. As Osgood sees it, "there is no evidence that the principal policy-makers were consciously unfolding a farsighted strategic plan at this time, even though events had forced them to execute the first major measure of containment; and it is certain that they had not

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[72] Ibid., p. 143.

[73] See Jones, pp. 190-93, for an excellent selection of excerpts of this testimony.

grasped the problem of limited war which a strategy of containment would entail."[74]

Thus a confusing picture developed, one with three separate and distinct viewpoints, the correlation of which seems to defy all efforts. On one side of the triangle one sees containment through the window of budgets and Congressional committees. Here the trend is clear--what we are buying is the ability to deter, or if that fails to fight, a total war. The combination of two elements--the strict, continuing defense budget ceiling of approximately $15 billion of the Truman Administration, and the Congressional commitment to air power--made this trend inevitable during the years 1947-1950. There simply was not enough money left to develop the forces required for any other kind of war. The "balanced forces" arguments heard during this period were more attempts to prevent complete domination by the Air Force than proposals of a strategic plan for implementing containment. In fact, the reconciliation of containment with this budgetary-Congressional view in any manner is difficult.

The second side of the triangle can be glimpsed in the "official policy" statements of this period. Here there was no doubt that containment was our policy, but still a great deal of doubt as to how we proposed to contain. Only occasionally does this seem to have been recognized, as with Secretary of State Marshall's statement at a 1948 National Security Council meeting to the effect that "we were playing with fire while we had nothing with which to put it out."[75] In general, two points stand out:

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[74] Osgood, Limited War, p. 150.

[75] Millis, Forrestal Diaries, p. 373.

one, that the bomb was regarded as providing, by its very existence, the answer to all military problems; and two, that the idea of limited war had still not really penetrated. The Greek Civil War was regarded as a unique event, not as the model for future wars. The Berlin airlift, a classic example of a non-violent limited war situation, in which the Russians respected our aircraft and we respected their road and rail barriers, was not seen as a prototype of pressures and threats to come.[76] It might almost be said that, having adopted containment, we now ignored all its implications, including the central one of limited war, and regressed to the total war fixation.

Finally, as regards the third aspect--our action as crises developed--the government operated almost entirely on an *ad hoc* basis, since we had not appropriated nor planned for the type of situations we had to face. What is most surprising is that our improvised reactions were so successful. Greece was saved almost entirely by American resources, with military assistance directed by the Van Fleet mission predominating.[77] The Berlin airlift constituted a major cold war victory. Yet these successes had little effect in bringing the three sides of the triangle closer together.

As for military thought, 1947 saw the publishing of two articles which, since they had official sanction, gave the public its first real insight into War and Navy Department thinking.[78]

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[76] This point is well-made in Aron, pp. 178-79.

[77] Neitzel, Kaplan, and Coblenz, pp. 219-20.

[78] Bernard Brodie, "War Department Thinking on the Atomic Bomb," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, III, No. 6 (June, 1947), 150-53; and Bernard Brodie, "Navy Department Thinking on the Atomic Bomb," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, III, No. 7 (July, 1947), 177-81.

Neither service regarded atomic weapons as revolutionizing its tactics, and both stoutly proclaimed the vital importance of their military contributions to future strategy, yet even here there was no glimmer of a new military strategy, but only a warming over of World War II strategy with the addition of atomic bombs.

The record of testimony of military witnesses at Congressional hearings during these years serves to emphasize a few common points in an otherwise diverse picture. First, our strategy was defensive, confining us to a policy of reaction, rather than initiation. Second, the blow against which we must be prepared would be an unambiguous direct military onslaught. This led to the third consensus, the "total war or total peace" fixation, which didn't accommodate any solutions to the type of threat most likely to be launched by a Kremlin careful to avoid a casus belli. "Instead of adjusting our capabilities to the likely challenges, we tended to adjust our concept of the likely challenges to the enormity of the new weapons."[79] Beyond these common beliefs, the divergence of opinion was great.

Politico-Military Policy, 1948-1950

A brief chronological look at the salient points of our politico-military policy of the 1948-1950 era will serve to illustrate its multi-directional nature. In January of 1948 the President's Air Policy Commission, chaired by Thomas K. Finletter, published its report.[80] While supposedly limited to "national

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[79] Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, p. 27.

[80] President's Air Policy Commission, Survival in the Air Age: A Report by the President's Air Policy Commission (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1948).

aviation policy" by its precept, the report actually moved into the deeper waters of national security, and became, in effect, the Air Force view of national strategy. Its conclusions, as regards the military structure, therefore, were quite predictable:

> . . . this military establishment must be built around the air arm. Of course an adequate Navy and Ground Force must be maintained. But it is the air force and naval aviation on which we must mainly rely. Our military security must be based on air power.[81]

Equally predictable were its views that limited or localized wars were "not likely" and that we must prepare for "direct air assault on the United States mainland."[82] January 1, 1953 was tagged as "A-day," the day on which a Soviet atomic attack on this country would be possible, and a massive air power buildup was called for to counter this threat. In the report's plea for "a new strategic concept" with a core of air power, able to "retaliate with the utmost violence,"[83] can be seen the seeds of the "massive retaliation" doctrine of the mid-1950s.[84] On balance, the contributions of this paper in pointing to the weakness of our air arm, at a time when it was almost our sole defense, and in indicating clearly the often-ignored implications of "A-day," were offset by the erroneous conclusions drawn regarding the nature of war in the nuclear era and the likely effect of nuclear parity.

Contributing heavily to the myth of invincibility and omnipotence surrounding the atomic bomb was Winston Churchill's

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[81] Ibid., p. 8.

[82] Ibid., p. 22.

[83] Ibid., pp. 10, 23.

[84] See infra, chap. iv.

statement, carrying "the finality of a papal bull,"[85] that: "Nothing stands between Europe today and complete subjugation to Communist tyranny but the atomic bomb in American possession."[86]

The really critical level of preparedness to which the army had dropped in this period is best illustrated by General Alfred M. Gruenther's statement, at a White House briefing, that "employment of anything more than a division in any area would make partial mobilization a necessity."[87] In this atmosphere, and against the backdrop of the fall of Czechoslovakia and the increasing tensions in Berlin which were to lead in June to the blockade,[88] was held the Key West conference of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on "roles and missions" of the services. While no startling shifts in cold war strategy were made at this meeting, several troublesome issues were settled, and, in the words of Walter Millis, it:

> . . . marked the beginning of the effort to rebuild the Armed Forces of the United States. It also marked the first really serious attempt to grapple with the paralyzing divisions between the Services and to re-form the military establishment as a whole into a genuinely integrated team, designed to meet the actual, rather than the theoretic military problems confronting the country.[89]

Yet the attempt fell somewhat short of the mark, and what emerged was a reformulation of traditional roles, characterized by sufficient

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[85] Reinhardt, p. 51.

[86] See Randolph S. Churchill (ed.), Europe Unite: Speeches, 1947 and 1948, by Winston S. Churchill (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1950), p. 413.

[87] Millis, Forrestal Diaries, pp. 374-76.

[88] See ibid., p. 387, for the text of the remarkable Clay telegram from Berlin, and its shock effect on official Washington.

[89] Ibid., p. 390. (Italics mine.)

vagueness to allow each service considerable latitude in interpretation, and based on an unwritten understanding of "budget-balanced" forces. Thus in retrospect it may be categorized more accurately as a postponement of the formulation of a new strategic doctrine, rather than a first step into a new era.[90] Considering the unsettled conditions of the period in which the meeting was held, this outcome was very possibly the course of wisdom.

The hard budgetary pressure continued in 1948, and was in large measure responsible for repressing the emergence of limited war forces and strategy.[91] What did emerge in 1948 though, was a firmer recognition of America's pre-eminent concern with the defense of Europe, as a result of the loss of Czechoslovakia, the Berlin blockade, and the effects of the Brussels Pact. In July two groups of B-29s had gone to England and one to Berlin, firmly establishing atomic weapons in our diplomatic and military strategy[92] and presaging our later commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was in embryonic form by the end of 1948. Countering the 1948 success in Europe was the loss of China to the communists, now seen as inevitable, which had the effect of polarizing American interest and efforts to an even greater extent than before on the western end of the Eurasian continent.

The year 1949 represented no advance, and possibly a step backward in the development of a limited war strategy. Louis A.

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[90] Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, pp. 26-27.

[91] Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, p. 227.

[92] Millis, Arms and the State, p. 227.

Johnson replaced James Forrestal as Secretary of Defense, and in one of his first acts, decreed that the coordination of military and political matters, now taking place at several levels between the Defense and State Departments, must cease.[93] That he did not appreciate the value of this factor, so vital to effective limited war, is understandable considering his complete preoccupation with World War III and air-atomic power.[94]

The NATO treaty was signed in April, but although it was a military alliance, there was little available military power to pool in it. Its benefits were initially to be primarily political and psychological,[95] with only enough military ground strength to act as a "trip wire" or "plate glass window" to signal communist aggression and send United States atomic bombers on their way to Moscow. These bombers were to be our principal military contribution to the alliance,[96] indicating the close tie between NATO and our strategic retaliation posture. If NATO was born of a belief that our air-atomic power was not the ideal tool for containment, its creation nevertheless did not have any visible effect on our own military strategy. The birth of NATO does stand, however, as a convenient reference point to mark the first step in implementation of the world-wide collective security network which has exercised such a major influence on subsequent United States military policy.

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[93] Ibid., pp. 235-36.

[94] Osgood, Limited War, p. 152.

[95] Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, p. 228.

[96] Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 225, 229.

Our "disengagement" in the Far East continued, with evacuation of United States forces from South Korea in June, and a judgment, later in the year, by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that we could not defend Formosa.[97] In this can perhaps be seen the unbelievably low level to which our effective conventional forces had dropped, since the island is not in any sense physically or geographically indefensible, and since the Joint Chiefs of Staff could be presumed to be rendering a military, rather than a political, opinion.

The year was not completely barren of limited war ideas, however. In July George Kennan, still head of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, foresaw the need for a limited war strategy, and for expanded conventional forces to back it up. He warned the Joint Chiefs that while the national strategy was containment, our military posture was committing us more and more to the either-or choice of all-out atomic retaliation or nothing.[98] He argued for at least two highly mobile, mechanized divisions for use in "brush-fire" wars, pointing out that all our present strategy could offer allies was the uncomfortable prospect of liberation following conquest, if that.[99] While the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed that this type of force would be desirable, they declared that budget limitations imposed by the Truman Administration made it impossible.[100]

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[97] Ibid., p. 235. Millis refers to "four different occasions" on which this JCS finding was made.

[98] Ibid., pp. 242-43.

[99] Kostow, The United States in the World Arena, pp. 271-72.

[100] Ibid., p. 229. Kostow sees the explanation for this low priority for limited war capabilities as arising from a belief that by 1949 there were no possibilities for Soviet aggression in Europe that would not be tantamount to major war, coupled with the fact that the potentialities for Communist expansion in Asia were not appreciated.

Whatever chance this limited war proposal might have had in saner times, it had none whatsoever in mid-1949, for the Pentagon was then caught up in one of the bitterest, most acrimonious, long drawn-out debates in military history, the "supercarrier vs. B-36" controversy. The basic underlying cause was the constant budgetary pressure, that kept all services on short rations and short tempers, and forced them to adopt strategic postures with which they did not wholly agree, and which they felt were not in the nation's best interests.[101] The immediate field of battle was the fiscal year 1950 budget, and the spark that touched off the conflagration was Secretary Johnson's cancelling of the Navy's newest carrier in April in an effort to "cut the fat" from military spending, convinced as he was that Stalin's aim was to goad America into spending itself into bankruptcy.[102] The "revolt of the admirals" which followed culminated in congressional hearings[103] in the summer and fall of 1949 which, while not completely clarifying the immediate issue, placed on record a great deal of information concerning, in Admiral Arthur W. Radford's words, "the kind of war for which

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[101] F. Y. Caemmerer, Missions of the Services, Twentieth Century Fund Study of Civil-Military Relations (preliminary edition, mimeographed), cited in Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, pp. 271-72.

[102] U. S., Congress, Senate, Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations, Hearings, Military Situation in the Far East, 82nd Cong., 1st Sess., 1951, pp. 2,626-27. Cited hereafter as Senate, MacArthur Hearings.

[103] U. S., Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, Investigation of the B-36 Bomber Program, 81st Cong., 1st Sess., 1949; and U. S., Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, The National Defense Program--Unification and Strategy, 81st Cong., 1st Sess., 1949. The latter is cited hereafter as House, Unification and Strategy Hearings.

this country should be prepared,"[104] and covering the strategic views of the nation's military leaders.[105] Throughout the testimony, although differing views were presented as to the efficacy of the B-36 and the "atomic blitz" form of warfare, there was tacit agreement that our strategy should be designed for total war against Russia. No mention was made of limited war. Even the Navy, in striving to justify continued carrier development by every possible argument, did not make what might have been their best case, the need for carrier-based air power in limited wars on the rimlands of Eurasia.[106] This, possibly better than any other contemporary illustration, demonstrates the tunnel vision induced in those years by long-continued budget restrictions, against a background of sole possession of the atomic bomb. To be sure the Navy did, throughout, urge restraint on the use of force, question the value of a strategy of annihilation, underscore the need to look to the peace that would follow a war, and emphasize the need for a close political-military relationship--all elements of limited war--but preoccupation with a major war with Russia as the only foreseeable conflict caused the entire debate to be peripheral to the strategic problem of limited war.[107] Admiral Radford accused the air force of

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[104] House, Unification and Strategy Hearings, p. 41.

[105] Kissinger has termed this "the first important postwar debate on strategic doctrine." Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, p. 34.

[106] This point is made in a penetrating analysis by Osgood in Limited War, p. 153.

[107] House, Unification and Strategy Hearings. See particularly Admiral Radford's opening statement. In later questioning by the committee Radford endorsed the use of the atomic bomb "with precision on military objectives," but stated: "I am against indiscriminate bombing of cities." (Pp. 74-75.)

unilaterally determining United States strategy, through their precipitate procurement of intercontinental bombers with a large share of the limited defense funds.[108] General Omar N. Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in what now stands as a tribute to the Navy, declared that the reason the Navy was so often outvoted by the Joint Chiefs was their continuing preoccupation with their island-hopping campaign, and their failure to realize the kind of continental operations that war with Russia would involve.[109] When the dust of the hearings had settled, the Navy's attempts to break United States strategy loose from its fixation on the "quick, cheap and easy" victory symbolized by the atomic blitz was a failure, and Congress remained strongly air-force-oriented. As Representative Clarence Cannon, chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, put it:

> If there should be another war, . . . the outcome would be decisively determined by atomic warfare in three weeks or less . . . . And the atomic bomb, serviced by land-based bombers, is the only weapon which can ensure . . . protection.[110]

In the midst of these hearings, and seemingly having little effect on them, came the shattering announcement by President Truman, on September 23, 1949, that Russia had exploded an atomic device. With this event the whole strategic equation was altered, and America's defense structure, erected on the keystone of atomic monopoly, began to crumble. Subsequent policy development, much of it still necessarily shrouded in secrecy, exhibits a curious

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[108] Ibid., pp. 47-48.

[109] Ibid., pp. 528-29.

[110] Cited in Millis, Arms and the State, p. 44.

ambivalence. On the surface there seemed little realization of the true impact of the Russian bomb. President Truman has written:

> The Government of the United States was not unprepared for the Russian atomic explosion. There was no panic, and there was no need for emergency decisions. This was a situation that we had been expecting to happen sooner or later. To be sure, it came sooner than the experts had estimated, but it did not require us to alter the direction of our program.[111]

The immediate program did not appear to involve any rethinking of strategic doctrine, now that its foundation was gone, but rather centered on an effort to accelerate the development of a fusion weapon--the thermonuclear H-bomb--on the assumption that this would restore our dwindling weapons lead. That patriotic, thinking men were divided in their counsels on the wisdom of its development, sensing the incipient tragedy in this arms race, can be seen in the record of the Atomic Energy Commission hearings regarding the security clearance of nuclear physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer;[112] however in the final analysis the imperatives of power made it plain common sense to attempt to maintain a technological lead in this strange and all-powerful new field.

But if the H-bomb program was the only surface indication of reaction, it is a mistake to conclude that the government's total policy was one of "if A-bombs are good, H-bombs are better."

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[111] Truman, II, 307.

[112] U. S., Atomic Energy Commission, In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954). See also Warner R. Schilling's discerning analysis of the events and pressures involved, in "The H-Bomb Decision: How To Decide Without Actually Choosing," Political Science Quarterly, LXXVI, No. 1 (March, 1961), 24-46.

Likewise Osgood seems to ignore at least one divergent trend when he voices the criticism that "as far as the nation's top military minds were concerned, Russia's atomic explosion apparently failed to alter in the slightest way the prevailing preoccupation with preparing for a total nuclear war against the Soviet Union."[113]

Within the government responsible men grasped the true significance of the Soviet explosion and began a searching review of United States strategy--a review carried on in secret in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council, and the Atomic Energy Commission which even now can only be glimpsed in vague outline in such records as the Oppenheimer hearings.[114] This review postulated the forthcoming nuclear stalemate, and examined the spectrum of possible United States reactions to its implications. One branch of the "silent debate" led into the realm of the H-bomb, as has been described. A second and perhaps more significant review, conducted primarily by the National Security Council, re-examined the entire political and strategic problem. After months of intensive work through the fall and winter of 1949-1950, a major, long-term, policy re-evaluation, entitled NSC 68, was completed in April.[115] This document, never published, called for large expansions of our military, diplomatic, and economic effort to meet the Soviet threat. Based on huge budget increases, estimated as high as $37 billion under some sets of assumptions, it would have provided resources not only to deter major war, but also to

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[113] Osgood, Limited War, p. 157.

[114] Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 24[illegible]-47.

[115] Ibid., pp. 253-56.

fight the limited wars, now seen as more likely in an age of nuclear parity.[116] It would rectify the near-fatal weakness of our collective security position, which at that time discouraged allies by rendering us unable to contribute to their defense, but only to their radioactive liberation. President Truman gave the paper his somewhat ambiguous blessing, and the budget battles over its implementation in fiscal year 1952 were just getting into full swing when the Korean war intervened.[117] Thus while the slow workings of policy determination in a democracy had prevented any significant change in military posture between the Soviet atomic explosion in September 1949, and the outbreak of the Korean war in June 1950, nevertheless the charge of inaction so frequently leveled at the administration seems unduly harsh, and President Truman's own quote, set forth above, seems something of an over-generalization. In view of the continued reductions in defense spending announced in the budget submission of January 1950,[118] it seems highly questionable whether, without Korea, NSC 68 would have appreciably affected subsequent budget ceilings or defense posture; however the military staff work done on this paper served as the foundation for the enormous military expansion of 1950-1951. In the development of an official limited war strategy for the United States, a process still not complete, NSC 68 occupies an important niche.

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[116] Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, p. 225.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Within a ceiling of $13.5 billion, the President planned for a ten-division Army, a Navy of 238 major combatant ships, and a 48-group Air Force. This represented a personnel reduction of 190,628 from the previous year. New York Times, January 10, 1950, p. 20.

Eastward Communist Pressure

During the years between 1947 and 1950, our military security efforts that extended beyond continental defense were centered on Europe. With the exception of Japan, non-European areas figured in our strategy only to a minor degree. That Europe would have been the most desirable prize for the communists seems certain, as does the wisdom of ensuring its defense. In doing this, however, with the limited resources made available by the Truman Administration, the inevitable effect was to limit our power potential elsewhere so greatly as to invite communist expansion. It is quite possible that the vigorous communist activities in Europe over the period 1947-1949 were designed to center the West's attention there, and divert our resources from China in the critical years of Mao's revolution.[119] By 1950, however, the world situation had changed in two significant ways. In Europe containment had been a success. The Greek-Turkish Aid Program, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Airlift, and NATO had combined to block practically all possibilities of easy Soviet expansion westward. In Asia, the complete victory of Communist China had opened up vast new potential areas of conquest. Here in the "grey areas"[120] of the Eurasian rimlands the communists saw a ripe field for exploitation, and their pressure shifted accordingly.

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[119] This point is made by Rostow in The United States in the World Arena, p. 170.

[120] A term coined by Thomas K. Finletter in his Power and Policy: U. S. Foreign Policy and Military Power in the Hydrogen Age (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1954).

Limited War Strategy, 1947-1950

The progress of the limited war concept in the years immediately preceding Korea, although slight, was more encouraging than that in the immediate postwar period. While there is no doubt that the dominant trend of America's military posture was toward ever greater reliance on air-atomic retaliation, as demanded by extreme budgetary pressures, nevertheless an increasingly articulate undertone of limited war thinking is apparent. The first major breakthrough was in the acceptance of containment as a United States policy. Even though not backed up by a coherent strategy for its implementation, this concept, if retained, made the ultimate adoption of a limited war posture inevitable. Thereafter, although we continued to talk atomic retaliation, our reaction to actual communist aggressive moves was pragmatic and limited. Finally, if our earlier strategy had left us no answer to the preferred forms of Soviet action--internal subversion, guerrilla operations, and limited war, carefully calculated so as never to be "worth" all-out war--the explosion of the Soviet atomic device acted as a powerful catalyst to bring about the comprehensive reappraisal that produced NSC 68, blueprint for a strategy of limited war. For all the optimistic signs, however, these embryonic vestiges of limited war thinking had still not been translated into any appreciable change in the unwieldy heft or dull cutting edge of the sword of the nation's military might when it was plunged into the crucible of Korea.

CHAPTER III

KOREA--PRACTICAL LESSONS IN LIMITED WAR

Significance

In the development of postwar American strategy the Korean War occupies a unique and significant position. It stands as the classic example of limited war--the war that we would never have believed possible, had it not actually occured. Although when the final history is written, Korea may stand as the most momentous event of our era, this study will not speculate at length on the world-wide political implications of this new departure, but will concentrate on United States military strategy as it was applied in this limited war, and as it evolved from it.

America has a long history of being ill-prepared for entry into war; however, in the past this has applied primarily to our military posture. In the Korean War not only our tangible military might but also our strategy and the psychological outlook of the American people were completely inadequate for the struggle into which we were catapulated. If the efficacy of air-atomic retaliation as a deterrent to all forms of war and aggression was doubted by the National Security Council in the work on NSC 68, it was conclusively proved inadequate by the North Korean People's Army on the morning of June 25, 1950. But although the retaliatory threat was ineffective as a strategy, the larger policy of containment passed its baptism of fire in Korea with flying colors.

because of the strategy confusion of the postwar years, and the lack of understanding of the concept of limited war, American response in Korea was improvised and confused, and many lessons had to be learned the hard way. Nevertheless our behavior was, in general, correct, a fact which Brodie credits "to our intelligence even in confusion and not to our foresight."[1] We instinctively responded with limited force, and slowly developed an ad hoc limited war doctrine, a process which, since it was of necessity superimposed upon a bloody struggle, was much more difficult than it would have been in peacetime, and was responsible for most of the politico-military difficulties during the conflict and for the aftermath of psychological aversion to the entire concept of limited war.

Korea's true significance, in a military sense, centers on the limitations concept as it relates to objectives. On these barren and frozen hills, strategy in the modern sense evolved from the narrow concept of "the art of bringing forces to the battlefield in a favorable position,"[2] to the broader one that concerns itself with the ultimate objectives of the battle, even of the war. It is here, in the balancing of military capabilities with political objectives, and the equilibrating of both with the risk of total war, that the problems and lessons of Korea, as well as essence of limited war, lie.

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[1] Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, p. 338.

[2] Lord Wavell, one of the most reflective of military men, uses this definition in Soldiers and Soldiering: or Pitfalls of War, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), p. 47. Its inadequacy is discussed in Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, pp. 11-19.

The Korean war was a form of conflict for which the American military were not trained, and for which the American people, by temperament and tradition, were not adapted. Although its challenge was met with a relative degree of success by a government "behaving better than it knew how to,"[3] the perceptive saw that this type of response would not be adequate for a future in which Korea might lose its uniqueness and stand as a pattern for a wide range of conflicts. Thus the painfully slow process of revising a national strategy began--and still continues. It took, as its starting point, Korea--why the communists attacked, why we defended, our objectives and actions, the lessons learned, and the observed results.

The Communist Attack

Little can be developed here beyond the range of speculation as to the true motives of the Kremlin in choosing Korea as the scene of their next power bid and in shifting their tactics, for the first time since World War II, from subversion to direct assault; but the transcendent importance of gaining an insight into Soviet thinking demands that every reasonable attempt at explanation be made.

A logical thesis starts with Kahn's comparison of Soviet expansion to

> . . . a fluid stream which moves constantly, wherever it is permitted to move, toward a given goal. Its main concern is to make sure that it has filled every nook and cranny available to it in the basin of world power. But if it finds unassailable barriers in its path, it accepts these philosophically and

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[3] Herman Kahn, On Thermonuclear War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 418.

> accommodates itself to them. The main thing is that there should always be pressure, unceasing constant pressure, toward the desired goal.[4]

if this is accepted, the success of the West's containment actions in Europe could be expected to produce the eastward shift in communist pressure touched upon earlier.[5] As for the specific choice of Korea as the target, and the decision to call a straight power play, a good case can be made that these were encouraged by a series of United States actions.

In September, 1947, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had concluded that "from the standpoint of military security, the United States has little strategic interest in maintaining the present troops and bases in Korea," and they accordingly recommended withdrawal of the 45,000 men stationed there.[6] This redeployment was accomplished by June, 1949, leaving in Korea only some five hundred American military advisers to assist in the training of the South Korean 65,000-man army.[7] In the eyes of the communists the "mantle of direct American responsibility had been lifted."[8] While the North Korean army was expanded to formidable size and provided with modern Russian heavy equipment, no corresponding buildup occurred south of the thirty-eighth parallel.

Shortly before this withdrawal of United States forces, General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers

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[4] [Kennan], Foreign Affairs, XXV, No. 4, 575.

[5] Supra, chap. ii.

[6] The text of this JCS memorandum is reproduced in Truman, II, 325-26, with related comments.

[7] Ibid., p. 329.

[8] Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, p. 234.

in Japan, had specifically excluded Korea from the American defense perimeter.[9] If the communists entertained any doubts as to the acceptance of this position by higher levels of the United States government, Secretary of State Acheson removed them by his speech to the National Press Club on January 12, 1950, when in almost identical language he reiterated the defense line, excluding Korea.[10]

It would be unrealistic, however, to consider these policy statements as the "invitation" that brought on the communist attack, as is so often charged. While our words may have lent some support to the communist evaluation of our intentions, our actions could not help but carry much greater weight in their intelligence assessment of the United States intentions as well as capabilities. Our withdrawal from Korea was open for the world to see, as was the inadequacy of the lightly-armed South Korean army, without tanks, heavy artillery, or planes. Likewise the depths to which American overall military readiness had sunk were accurately measured, as were the inflexibility of our strategic doctrine, our preoccupation with the defense of Europe, and the inadequacies of

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[9] "Now the Pacific has become an Anglo-Saxon lake and our line of defense runs through the chain of islands fringing the coast of Asia. It starts from the Philippines and continues through the Ryukyu Archipelago, which includes its main bastion, Okinawa. Then it bends back through Japan and the Aleutian Island chain to Alaska." New York Times, March 2, 1949, p. 22.

[10] Secretary Acheson's limit of direct American security commitments ran from the Aleutians to Japan, then to the Ryukyus, thence to the Philippines. He qualified it, however, to the extent that for the security of other areas in the Pacific, ultimate reliance could be had "upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations." See "Crisis in Asia--An Examination of U. S. Policy," State Department Bulletin, January 23, 1950, pp. 115-16.

our undermanned and unseasoned divisions in Japan, experienced only in constabulary occupation duties.

Looking beyond the sphere of United States action, a significant consideration in the Soviet decision to attack must have been their possession of the atomic bomb. A rational appraisal of the atomic balance in 1950, showing the great preponderance in favor of the West, overrules the thesis that the Korean aggression can be entirely explained by the Russian entry into the nuclear arena, as is argued by the post hoc, ergo propter hoc school; nevertheless the appearance of this weapon in the Soviet arsenal undoubtedly removed some restraints from the Politburo.

It has been suggested, with some logical substantiation, that the North Koreans attacked prematurely, on their own initiative and without Soviet blessing, thus maneuvering the Kremlin into a position where it had to back them.[11] It seems more likely, however, that Russian leadership was convinced that the American government would not consider South Korea "worth" defending. Indeed, "if they interpreted America's conduct of foreign policy in terms of their own standards, they could hardly have reached any other conclusion than that the United States would acquiesce in a limited move of a satellite army into a minor strategic position, just as a chess player must accept the maneuver of a pawn when he is in

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[11] This thesis is advanced by Izidore F. Stone in The Hidden Story of the Korean War (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1952); and by Wilbur W. Whitecook in "North Korea Jumps the Gun," Current History, 21, No. 115 (March, 1951), 136-44. It is considered and tacitly rejected in John W. Spanier, The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 23-24; and Robert Strausz-Hupé et al., Protracted Conflict (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 40.

no position to prevent it."[12]

Viewed in this light, the first important conclusion to be drawn from the attack is that it was, from the start, not an all-out strategic assault but a strictly controlled limited war offensive, probing into what appeared to be a political and military vacuum.

The United States Picks Up the Gauntlet

Even more enigmatic than the communist attack is the matter of the United States response. The situation with which we were confronted was completely at variance with our strategic thought. The field of conflict was not Europe, the threat was not directed at the United States, the aggressor was not the Soviet Union. The blow was accurately and unerringly directed at our blind spot, at the gap in our defenses that should have been filled by a limited war strategy. We were presented by "the limited war quandary," an attack that is not an all-out challenge to a vital interest, and that is not made by the principal enemy.[13]

The problem was compounded by the doubt that prevailed in Washington concerning communist intentions. Was this a clever ruse, a feint, designed to get us to commit our meager forces to the Far East so that the way would be clear for a Soviet takeover in Europe? Was it merely a probing operation, testing the resolve and strength of the West? Was it calculated to provoke a response that would give Russia a valid excuse for plunging the world into total war? While all of these possibilities and a host of others would have to be weighed in any case, United States unpreparedness

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[12] Osgood, Limited War, p. 165.

[13] Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, p. 46.

for this type of action made clear thinking and proper reaction much more difficult than it need have been in June, 1950.

From a purely military point of view, defense of Korea had been ruled out long before the attack, since plans for that area, as for most of the world, had been based on the importance of Korea in total war. The Joint Chiefs of Staff "had drawn up a plan of strategic defense in Asia which was based on the assumption that under no circumstances would the United States engage in the military defense of the Korean peninsula."[14] This position was no doubt reinforced by the feeling, prevalent among military men, that "anyone who commits the American army on the mainland of Asia ought to have his head examined."[15]

Nevertheless when the attack came, at the first meeting of the Chief Executive with his advisers, President Truman records "complete, almost unspoken acceptance on the part of everyone that whatever had to be done to meet this aggression had to be done. There was no suggestion from anyone that either the United Nations or the United States could back away from it."[16] Thus our strategy had failed us, by the simple empirical test of not proving valid in time of crisis. It is important to examine the reasons for the United States reaction to this challenge, so as to assist in the

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[14] Courtney Whitney, MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 318.

[15] This statement has been attributed to General MacArthur. See Richard E. Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The General and the President, and the Future of American Foreign Policy (New York: Harper, Straus and Young, 1951), p. 99. In any case, it undoubtedly is a true representation of General MacArthur's opinion. See, e.g., Senate, MacArthur Hearings, pp. 103, 107, 136-37, 259-60, 267, and 280-81.

[16] Truman, II, 334.

formulation of a better strategy, by extrapolation from known responses.

The dominant theme behind the first high-level decisions seems to be the fear that failure to act here and now would precipitate a chain reaction of aggression.[17] The lesson of Manchuria in 1931, of the Rhineland in 1936, had been well-learned. If this aggression went unchecked, it would be followed by another, and another, leading inevitably to World War III.

But this belief, reinforced by the underlying guilt feelings deriving from our withdrawal of the 1930s, only provided the background for a host of other considerations. It is an over-simplification to say, as Osgood has, that the defense was made unavoidable by "larger political considerations," rather than "military strategic grounds."[18] Both political and military factors, with countless psychological overtones, are inextricably bound up in the decision. A communist South Korea would be a dagger pointing at the heart of Japan. Considering that Russia held the Sakhalin Islands to the north, Japan would be caught "between the upper and lower jaws of the Russian bear."[19] The political consequences of this communist advance upon emergent democracy in Japan could well be disastrous.[20] Considering the

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[17] Ibid., p. 333.

[18] Osgood, Limited War, p. 165.

[19] John Foster Dulles, "A Militaristic Experiment," State Department Bulletin, July 16, 1950, p. 58. See also John Foster Dulles, "Korean Attack Opens New Chapter in History," Ibid., August 7, 1950, pp. 207-08.

[20] See Marguerite Higgins' article in New York Herald Tribune, June 27, 1950, p. 10.

Oriental respect for visible power, inaction now might so undermine the will to resist that the entire Far East would succumb to the irresistible force of communism. But the effects would not be confined to this theater. The eyes of the world were literally on Washington, appraising our action. Failure here would gravely weaken the backbone of the free world and would cause its progressive disintegration.[21] There was no doubt of our moral obligation to South Korea. How many of our friends, who were relying on our security guarantees for their very existence, would stand firm with us if we backed down in the face of the first real challenge? If America abandoned South Korea, Allies would see a resurgent isolationism, would consider American pledges as unreliable, and would turn to neutralism in the face of seemingly invincible Russian power. As NATO dissolved, as Strategic Air Command bases were declared non grata, the balance of global power would shift ever more to communism. Beyond the United States, yet dependent on it, lay the United Nations. Only five years old, it had progressively, and particularly in recent months, been growing more and more decrepit and impotent as a result of Russian intransigence. If the society of nations could not make collective security work in the face of this unambiguous challenge, Korea would be the death warrant of the United Nations, as Manchuria had been for the League of Nations. Yet here too, United States action would be the decisive ingredient.

John Foster Dulles, principal Republican adviser to the Secretary of State, had just returned to Tokyo from an inspection

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[21] The possible effects of non-intervention are imaginatively discussed in Spanier, pp. 23-30.

trip of Korea when the attack came. His message to Washington well expresses the feelings prevalent at the time.

> It is possible that South Koreans may themselves contain and repulse attack, and, if so, this is best way. If, however, it appears they cannot do so then we believe that U.S. force should be used even though this risks Russian counter moves. To sit by while Korea is overrun by unprovoked armed attack would start disastrous chain of events leading most probably to world war. We suggest that Security Council might call for action on behalf of the organization under Article 106 by the five powers or such of them as are willing to respond.[22]

In short, it seemed a "put up or shut up" test by the communists, and although President Truman calls this "the toughest decision I had to make as President,"[23] there seems to have been little doubt as to the outcome.

Two points are worth further brief examination. First, massive air-atomic response, although possibly called for by our strategy, was never seriously considered. The need for severe limitation of the conflict was instinctively recognized as supreme from the outset, as can be seen from the fact that the initial set of directives from Washington after the North Korean attack ordered the Seventh Fleet into the Formosa Strait "to prevent the conflict from spreading to that area."[24]

The second point deals with United States relations with the United Nations, and the psychological considerations resulting from that relationship. These have been widely misunderstood, and have

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[22] Truman, II, 335. The slightly different version given in Whitney, p. 322, is probably accounted for by paraphrasing to avoid compromising a crypto system.

[23] Ibid., p. 463.

[24] Ibid., p. 334.

led to much confusion of thinking concerning Korea. The United States decision to intervene did not depend on United Nations action.[25] Our decision was based primarily on self-interest. It was a power-political application of containment to a threat to our security. United Nations sanction was vigorously sought, and obtained, but it did not alter the most basic reason for our intervention. What the United Nations entry did accomplish, inter alia, was to give the military action the color of a crusade. It was used by Washington to cover the Realpolitik underlying our actions with a cloak of supranational idealism. This resulted in a confusion concerning our true interests that was to bear bitter fruit when military fortunes went against us and the high moral aim of punishing aggression did not coincide with the national interest of containment. This imprecision in explaining our actions to the American public not only contributed much to the unfortunate psychological aftermath of Korea, but it makes difficult the maintaining of guidelines for consistent courses of action in future crises.

United States Objectives and Actions

In proceeding now to an examination of the administration's conduct of the war, only those points will be touched upon which relate to the idea of limits or limiting. It should be borne in mind that while the Korean War can clearly be described as a limited war, the objectives of the war were by no means as limited as they might appear on the surface, because the main objectives, as Brodie

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[25] This point is developed comprehensively in Osgood, Limited War, pp. 165-66, and in Waltzel, Kaplan, and Goodman, pp. 280-88.

has pointed out, were psychological and lay outside Korea.[26] It is this factor, compounded by our complete lack of a strategic doctrine for limited war, that was responsible for most of the confusion and frustration that arose. The administration had no integrated master plan, but made strategic decisions on a day-by-day basis, within the framework of the three general precepts discussed in the below subsections. The testimony of Louis Johnson, to the effect that when he left the Defense Department in September, 1950, "there was no definite policy lined out as to what our action should be and how we were going to end this thing,"[27] bears out General MacArthur's ringing charge, "There is no policy--there is nothing, I tell you, no plan, or anything."[28]

Keeping the war limited

The primary consideration of the administration throughout the war was to limit it by every means possible. President Truman has written:

> Every decision I made in connection with the Korean conflict had this one aim in mind: to prevent a third world war and the terrible destruction it would bring to the civilized world. This meant that we should not do anything that would provide the excuse to the Soviets and plunge the free nations into full-scale all-out war.[29]

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[26] Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, p. 313.

[27] Quoted in Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 273-74.

[28] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 68.

[29] Truman, II, 345. In his address to the nation of April 11, 1951, the President expressed much the same idea: "In the simplest terms, what we are doing in Korea is this: We are trying to prevent a third world war . . . . We do not want to widen the conflict. We will use every effort to prevent that disaster."

it is apparent now, with the benefit of hindsight, that in this overconcentration on the risks involved we erred on the conservative side, did not grasp opportunities, and in general showed too much, rather than too little, restraint. Despite our strategic superiority we felt we could not afford to win because Russia could not afford to lose.[30] The fear that the Soviets were only awaiting an excuse to initiate total war so dominated the Administration's thinking that they were determined to offer no possible pretext for Russian intervention. In fact, a major part of the Truman-MacArthur controversy revolved about this point of assessment of communist intentions, with the Administration at the one extreme noted above and General MacArthur at the other, holding that Soviet action would be in no way determined by our moves.[31]

A complete discussion of all the limits applied in Korea cannot be undertaken here, but a selection of examples will show the wide spectrum over which the limiting effort ranges.

In the field of diplomatic maneuver, one of the President's first decisions was to avoid publicly charging Russia with responsibility for the North Korean attack. This move had been urged by Chiang Kai-shek, but was felt to be too dangerous.[32]

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[30] See Bernard Brodie, "Unlimited Weapons and Limited War," The Reporter, November 18, 1954, pp. 16-20; Strausz-Hupé, Protracted Conflict, p. 49; and Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, pp. 47-48, for discussions of this overconservatism.

[31] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, pp. 9, 69, 130-31, 198, and 250-51. Secretary Acheson did not evade taking issue with General MacArthur over this. He stated: "I cannot accept the assumption that the Soviet Union will go its way regardless of what we do. I do not think that Russian policy is formed that way any more than our own policy is formed that way." Ibid., p. 1719.

[32] Truman, II, 345-46.

Throughout the conflict the same pattern of polite blindness was observed in all diplomatic relations with the Soviets.

In the military field, limitations were placed upon almost every strategic move, and even some tactical ones from which political repercussions were feared. There was a constant strain on the Administration that General MacArthur, known to be far from agreement with Washington on most issues, would accidentally or deliberately expand the war.[33] This is well shown in the following exchange from the MacArthur hearings:

> Senator Morse: . . . would it be fair for me to conclude that because it was felt in the State Department and by other Government officials here at home that General MacArthur was not in sympathy with the restrictions that were being placed upon him as commander to conduct a limited war in Korea, that you, as Secretary of State, became fearful that there was a constant risk that General MacArthur, in exercising his field powers as commander, might initiate some action that would involve us in a war less limited than the policies of our country desired?
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> Secretary Acheson: Yes; I think that that would be fair for you to conclude . . . a theater commander must have very considerable latitude. He cannot be directed in meticulous detail; in exercising his discretion and authority I think there was worry on my part that he would exercise it in the direction of enlarging rather than confining the conflict.[34]

Among the specific military limitations, the most paramount fall into the geographic category. These involve the thirty-eighth parallel, discussed at length below, and the sanctity of the

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[33] It is incorrect to consider this a civil-military controversy in the classic sense, with the military on one hand rebelling against civilian control on the other. Throughout the war military authorities in Washington, including all members of the JCS, were in agreement with top civilian policy-makers on almost all major issues, particularly those concerning military limitations.

[34] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 1789.

Manchurian border. This latter item was reiterated endlessly by Washington, and affected not only ground troop action, but the supporting arms as well. "Hot pursuit" of enemy aircraft beyond the border was not allowed. Manchurian hydroelectric plants on the Yalu River, and even plants in North Korea which supplied Manchuria, were ordered spared. The bombing of bridges across the river was forbidden, even though General MacArthur reported: "Men and material in large force are pouring across all bridges over the Yalu from Manchuria."[35] Even after Communist China's open entry into the war, territory beyond the Korean border still remained inviolate from any type of action or attack. The sensitivity that surrounded the geographic limit was so great as to result in the extension of the protected zone south from the border into Korea itself. One of many examples of this was the Joint Chiefs of Staff's prohibition on the use of non-Korean troops in the provinces adjacent to the Yalu. Although General MacArthur attacked these "extraordinary inhibitions" by every conceivable means and with every available weapon, including partisan politics and going over the head of the President to the public, the strength of the Administration's resolve was such that the limitations remained.

In the category of weapon employment, the most conspicuous limitation was the ban on atomic weapons. Many reasons have been advanced for this. Brodie lists three which he feels were the most important: first, the desire to save our then-limited stockpile of bombs and not waste it on a diversionary action; second,

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[35]Truman, II, 375.

the lack of suitable targets in Korea; and third, the strong and emotional opposition of our allies, especially the British. He adds a fourth subsidiary reason, the fear of Soviet retaliation with a bomb on Pusan or a Japanese base, but largely discounts it.[36] Millis adds the two considerations that we had not yet developed tactical atomic weapons, and that the use of "city-busters" in the mountains and valleys of Korea risked their proving ineffective, with a consequent dissipation of the immense diplomatic and prestige values attaching to them.[37] General Taylor, with a more intimate knowledge of the actual decisions and decision-making processes, endorses all of these reasons.[38] It seems likely, however, that although the above considerations would have carried considerable weight, the supreme motive, the ultimate argument, for non-use of atomic weapons was the overriding importance of limiting the conflict by any and every means. It is worthy of note that this atomic ban is one island of agreement in a sea of differences between General MacArthur and the Administration.[39]

Other limitations, not falling in the diplomatic, geographic, or weapons employment categories, ranged from the continued refusal to use Chiang's troops in Korea or in an attack on the mainland (for political as well as military reasons), to the non-imposition of the oft-recommended blockade of Communist China, to the non-implementation of proposed mobilization measures at home.

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[36] Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, pp. 318-20.

[37] Millis, Arms and Men, pp. 334-35.

[38] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, p. 16.

[39] General MacArthur always denied that he at any time recommended the use of atomic weapons in the Korean War. Senate, MacArthur Hearings, pp. 77, 260.

Conserving our strength

Aside from the ever-present fear of expanding the scope of conflict, a second reason for applying restraint was the need to avoid deep involvement in what was seen to be a secondary struggle against the opposition's third team. President Truman stated: "I never allowed myself to forget that America's principal enemies were sitting in the Kremlin, or that we could not afford to squander our reawakening strength as long as that enemy was not committed in the field but only pulling the strings behind the scenes."[40]

Washington was keenly aware of the need for maintaining sufficient force to deal with any other challenges Russia might issue at any of a myriad of potential trouble-spots, as can be seen from even a cursory inspection of the official papers of these years. This policy was subjected to its greatest stress when General Macarthur applied pressure for a greater effort against Communist China. The classic statement of the Administration's view on this was made by General Bradley at the Macarthur hearings, in the following words:

> . . . enlargement of the war in Korea to include Red China would probably delight the Kremlin more than anything else we could do. It would necessarily tie down additional forces, especially our sea power and our air power while the Soviet Union would not be obliged to put a single man into the conflict.
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> . . . enlarging the war . . . would increase the risk we are taking by engaging too much of our power in an area that is not the critical strategic prize. Red China is not the powerful nation seeking to dominate the world. Frankly, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this strategy would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.[41]

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[40] Truman, II, 456.

[41] Senate, Macarthur Hearings, pp. 731-32.

In speaking for the Air Force, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, the Chief of Staff, constantly urged against employing the Strategic Air Command in an effort against Manchuria, not because of political considerations, but from the purely military point of view that the attrition suffered in planes and crews would destroy the deterrent effect of our "shoestring Air Force" and leave us "as a nation, naked for several years to come." The Strategic Air Command must be preserved intact for its principal role--to deter the Soviet Union, or, if this failed, to destroy it.[42]

The President's determination not to expand the war went so far that the Joint Chiefs' directive of September 15, 1950, to General MacArthur emphasized that if major Chinese units drove south of the thirty-eighth parallel, the United States "would not permit itself to become engaged in a general war with Communist China."[43]

Winston Churchill, whom none could accuse of appeasement or non-appreciation of intelligent power application, forcefully advised against getting deeply involved in "the Far Eastern diversion" and thus exposing Europe to mortal danger.[44] If a third world war broke out, or even if a strong power bid were made in another theater, we would be nearly helpless with the bulk of our forces committed to a minor enemy in a secondary theater.[45]

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[42] Ibid., pp. 1379, 1385, 1391, and 1398-99.

[43] Ibid., p. 718.

[44] Spanier, p. 147, citing H.C. Deb., vol. 481, cols. 1835-36.

[45] Osgood states that eight percent of our effective armed forces were tied down in Korea as it was. Limited War, p. 183. When General MacArthur requested more troops during the Chinese Communist assault, Secretary of the Army Frank Pace informed the President that the 82nd Airborne Division was the only uncommitted force in the United States. Truman, II, 386.

Even without Korea the military leaders, with their traditional conservatism vastly heightened by the postwar deterioration of the armed forces, were well aware of our military weakness and anxious to avoid any global struggle until "the time we are reasonably prepared to meet it."[46]

Thus a second prime determinant in the limiting process can be seen in the efforts to conserve our military power for the main event.

Maintaining good relations with allies and the United Nations

The third major unchanging objective of the Administration, which, like the other two, operated to limit the conflict, was the maintenance of good relations with allies and with the United Nations. President Truman states in his Memoirs:

> From the very beginning of the Korean action I had always looked at it as a Russian maneuver, as part of the Kremlin's plan to destroy the unity of the free world. NATO, the Russians knew, would succeed only if the United States took part in the defense of Europe. The easiest way to keep us from doing our share in NATO was to draw us into military conflict in Asia.[47]

In numerous speeches at the time the President tried to bring home this idea, e.g., "The Kremlin is still trying to divide the free nations. The thing that the Kremlin fears most is the unity of the free world,"[48] and:

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[46] Secretary of Defense Marshall, in Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 479.

[47] Truman, II, 437.

[48] Speech in Tullahoma, Tennessee, on June 23, 1951, quoted ibid., p. 457.

> The Kremlin is trying, and has been trying for a long time, to drive a wedge between us and the other nations. It wants to see us isolated. It wants to see us distrusted. It wants to see us feared and hated by our allies . . . . If the United States were to widen the conflict, we might well have to go it alone.
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> If we go it alone in Asia, we may destroy the unity of the free nations against aggression. Our European allies are nearer to Russia than we are. They are in far greater danger. If we act without regard to the danger that faces them, they may act without regard to the dangers that we face. Going it alone brought the world to the disaster of World War II. We cannot go it alone in Asia and go it in company in Europe . . . . Going it alone in Asia might wreck the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty, and the whole system of collective security we are helping to set up.
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> That would be a tremendous Soviet victory. We do not intend to fall into that trap. I do not propose to strip this country of its allies in the face of the Soviet danger. The path of collective security is our only sure defense against the dangers that threaten us.[49]

In global perspective, allies were of transcendent importance, both for short-run and long-run considerations. And the allies, individually and collectively, were categorically opposed to any extension, or even continuance, of the Korean conflict. Recently scourged by war, still in the process of basic recuperation, they saw the end of their world in either full-scale war or American overconcentration on the Far East. At the outbreak of the war, our allies had eagerly sought active United States intervention, as a down payment committing us firmly to collective security, and as a guarantee against the feared backslide into isolationism. As the struggle wore on, and they were called upon for increasing material, as well as moral and political, support, their enthusiasm

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[49] President Truman, "Why We Need Allies," address to Civil Defense Conference at Washington on May 7, 1951, printed in State Department Bulletin, May 14, 1951, p. 765.

dwindled. It changed to active worry when they saw crusading overtones appear in the United States. By early 1951 they were obsessed with the fear that General MacArthur could not or would not be restrained, and thus they possibly overreacted in their insistence, both in Washington and at Lake Success, that a settlement be found. The extreme edginess that prevailed was well demonstrated by the events set off by a press conference on November 30, 1950, at which President Truman replied to a question concerning the atomic bomb that: "There has always been active consideration of its use."[50] Ninety-six hours later Britain's Prime Minister Clement Attlee landed in the United States for an unscheduled four-day conference with American officials.

United Nations support for the action in Korea--largely determined by the United States and our allies--had been strong and rapid in the early months, but thereafter cooled proportionally with allied support. By early 1951, when the United States resolution branding Communist China an aggressor was being debated, support had dwindled to the point where a reluctant General Assembly only belatedly adopted it in amended form; the acceptance accompanied by reservations of the Western European nations as to future action, and active opposition by most of the Asian and African countries.[51] In the restrained words of Leland M. Goodrich,

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[50] Truman, II, 395.

[51] This condemnation by the General Assembly was made possible by the "Uniting for Peace" resolution drafted by the United States and adopted by the Assembly in November, 1950. A method for by-passing the Soviet veto in the Security Council, this resolution permitted the General Assembly to recommend collective measures by two-thirds vote. Hailed as a triumph for collective security, its vital weakness, well-illustrated in the Chinese aggression issue, is that members' votes are cast not on the basis of universal moral principles but on the degree to which their national self-interest is identified with either side of the question.

"the restoration of peace was accepted as an objective which to some extent took precedence over the resolve to deny to the aggressor any possible fruits of aggression."[52]

Both from allies and from the United Nations, therefore, came a powerful limiting force which could not be ignored by Washington. The administration's determination to "keep the allies happy" became a continuing objective of equal stature with, and to some degree overlapping, the other two major goals of preventing World War III and conserving our strength.

Secondary objectives

Beyond the three primary objectives discussed in the above sections, the United States was consistent in very little; and the overall policy, if there was any, could possibly best be described as "saving as much else as possible." In order to achieve the three primary goals, the Administration embarked on an extensive juggling act with secondary objectives, all the while striving to balance these political goals with military capabilities as the situation changed. It was here that General MacArthur struck his most telling blows, and that the Administration's conduct of the war has been most strenuously attacked. Brief examination of the problem seems appropriate here, since it almost certainly would become a major issue in any future limited war.

The Korean conflict has been described as America's first experience at "fighting a war according to Clausewitz rather than

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[52] Leland M. Goodrich, Korea: A Study of U. S. Policy in the United Nations (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956), pp. 162-67, 180. This is possibly the most readily-available work on US-UN relations during Korea.

Ludendorff,"[53] at using military force as a political instrument and subordinating it to political purpose. It is ironic that General MacArthur, America's foremost "political soldier," should often appear mistakenly in the guise of the pure militarist in this conflict, when he, probably better than any other military figure of the time, understood the full range of meaning behind the truth that war is only a tool of politics. The confusion is brought about by the differing scales of values, or utilities, that General MacArthur and the Administration attached to various political goals. More will be developed below on this subject, in a section on General MacArthur's position, but it is appropriate here to examine the issue of the interrelationship of military means and political ends, as this is central to the question of what the secondary objectives of the Korean war were.

War, as the Prussian General Karl von Clausewitz so well phrased it, is the continuation of politics by other means.

> The subordination of the political point of view to the military would be unreasonable, for policy has created war; policy is the intelligent faculty, war only the instrument, and not the reverse. The subordination of the military point of view to the political is, therefore, the only thing which is possible.[54]

In applying this to the Korean war, the Administration continually tried to keep the military situation subordinated to their political goals. As Martin Lichterman expresses it: "They did believe in victory, but at each step they wanted to know the

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[53] Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 388.

[54] Clausewitz, p. 598.

cost of victory, and to be sure that they were not buying it at a price which they were unprepared to pay."[55] However logical this may sound, a moment's consideration will reveal that it reverses Clausewitz. Political goals were established, changed, and rejected, based solely on the military ease with which they could be reached. General MacArthur was, as he described it, fighting in a political vacuum. Even in the meetings of the National Security Council indecision reigned supreme, with the State Department saying that it "preferred not to express political objectives with respect to Korea until military capabilities were established," while the Joint Chiefs of Staff were of the opinion "that a political decision was required before there could be suitable determination of military courses of action."[56]

This dilemma was caused by overconcentration in Washington on the primary objectives, with the attendant neglect of secondary ones on which the actual fighting hinged. There can be no doubt that a careful appraisal of military might is required before establishing political aims, but to reshape the latter continually depending on the successes or setbacks of forces in the field is, in the last analysis, to leave your major policy decisions to the initiative of enemy action. History records no surer road to defeat. Here lay the true tragedy of our failure to develop a limited war strategy in the few years of grace we had been allotted. No consensus existed on the interrelationship of limits and objectives, with no coherent strategy to rely on, and in the heat of fast-

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[55] Martin Lichterman, "Korea: Problems in Limited War," in Turner and Challener, p. 47.

[56] Ibid., p. 41.

moving events, planners in Washington so fixated on their primary objectives in the limiting process that insufficient attention could be given to the establishment of consistent secondary objectives to guide military action. As a result secondary objectives were allowed to fluctuate as a dependent variable based upon the military situation because of the mistaken fear that any tampering with this process would, ipso facto, upset the limits.

Proceeding now to an examination of specific secondary objectives, their adoption and rejection, it cannot be overemphasized that these were always distinctly subordinated to the three primary ones discussed above.[57] Our first "battle" objective was simply to push the North Koreans back across the thirty-eighth parallel, or, in President Truman's words, "to restore peace there and to restore the border."[58] American action to achieve this goal, both diplomatic and military, increased in magnitude, step by step, as the situation developed. On June 25, 1950, the day of the attack, General MacArthur was ordered to evacuate Americans from Korea and to provide the South Korean army with supplies and ammunition; and the Seventh Fleet, as noted previously, was ordered to prevent the spread of the conflict to Formosa. A United Nations resolution was obtained calling for a cease fire. The next day, as the attack accelerated and complete collapse of the South Korean army appeared

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[57] An outline of the shifts of these objectives, the factors which influenced the shifts, and the vigor with which the objectives were pursued is contained in Richard E. Neustadt, Presidential Power, the Politics of Leadership (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960), pp. 123-51.

[58] Truman, II, 341. This work (pp. 331-464) also provides the background for the events related in subsequent paragraphs of this subsection, unless otherwise indicated.

imminent, the President advanced another major step and authorized belligerent action--the use of American air and naval forces to support South Korean troops. Two points here are worthy of note: first, this action was taken in advance of any United Nations sanction; and second, the conspicuous omission of ground force authorization avoided committing us irrevocably to the struggle. On June 27 our draft resolution recommending that United Nations members furnish assistance to repel the attack was passed by the Security Council.[59]

The situation in Korea worsened steadily, and on June 30 President Truman took the irreversible step and authorized General MacArthur to commit American ground forces. This action was actually the most significant of all the initial decisions, yet when the Far East Commander recommended it, the President authorized it immediately upon being awakened with the request at five in the morning, without any lengthy consideration or any consultation with advisers.[60] Since the full import of the step could not have escaped the President, it must be considered that the use of ground forces, if necessary, was, in the Chief Executive's mind, implicit in the June 26 decision to use American military force. This being

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[59] This resolution, as well as the previous one and that of July 7 establishing the United Nations command, were made possible by a unique combination of circumstances: the unambiguous nature of the attack, the fortunate presence in Korea of a United Nations commission, which sent out reliable reports, and the Soviet boycott of the Security Council.

[60] General MacArthur appears to have been principally responsible for this decision. In fact, it may well be that without him it would never have been made. For an excellent discussion of this key issue, see Revere and Schlesinger, pp. 96-100. Also see Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 1122 (General Bradley's testimony), and pp. 235-36 (General MacArthur's testimony).

the case, one may at least speculate on the probability that in future limited wars, the commitment of any branch of the military services may carry the implied commitment of all others, if their use proves necessary or desirable. In Korea an attempt was made to limit the struggle to the easily-recallable arms, as can be seen from the June 26 order. However, in view of the ease with which this limit was overstepped in this case, its value as a "watershed point" in the future must be suspect.

Up to this point in the war, the political objective had remained constant as military force was steadily increased, and as this augmentation continued during the long withdrawal and the defensive struggle at Pusan, there was no change in the announced goal of restoring the status quo ante bellum. With General MacArthur's brilliant and decisive victory at Inchon, however, the United Nations forces went on the offensive and advanced with startling rapidity up the peninsula, confronting Washington with the need for making what Millis has termed "the one most critical decision of the Korean war"[61]--whether or not to stop at the thirty-eighth parallel.

There were three compelling reasons for continuing north. To stop the pursuit at a line not topographically configured for defense, and allow the now-disorganized communists to regroup and equip for renewed attack was militarily unsound. Second, the urge to gain the tremendous psychological advantages that would accrue to the United Nations and the free world from the total victory which now appeared easily obtainable was almost irresistible. Finally,

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[61] Millis, Arms and the State, p. 278.

since the division of Korea was at the root of the trouble, and since unification had been a political objective of the United Nations since 1947 (and a United States objective since the Cairo agreement of 1943), there was a strong body of opinion urging the seizure of this golden opportunity to accomplish by military force what the Soviets had prevented by any other means.

On the other side of the scale, counseling a halt at the parallel, was the threat of Communist China's intervention and general expansion of the war. The likelihood of this could only be estimated, using an objective calculation of Communist China's reaction to an advance of foreign troops toward her sensitive Manchurian border,[62] as well as an analysis of the frequent warnings she issued.[63] While there were crosscurrents of opinion at all levels, from the American public to the United Nations, the majority view almost everywhere was that Communist China was in no position to intervene militarily, and that the threats were chiefly political blackmail designed to influence the forthcoming United Nations vote on a resolution to unify Korea.[64] Also adding weight to the

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[62] Louis J. Halle has advanced the thesis that when we changed our objectives and advanced toward the border, Communist China felt herself the more menaced because we had officially refused to recognize her existence. Choice for Survival (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 55.

[63] The most significant of these warnings was the verbal one given by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chou En-lai, to the Indian Ambassador to Peking, K. M. Panikkar, to the effect that if United Nations forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, China would send in troops to help the North Koreans. However, this action would not be taken if only South Koreans crossed the parallel.

[64] Among the most lucid discussions of this key decision are those found in Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 272-[illegible]; Tavares and Schlesinger, pp. 134-[illegible]; and particularly Spanier, chap. v.

unification side of the balance was the general aura of invincibility surrounding General MacArthur after his "impossible" stroke at Inchon (which he counted against all advice) had in a few days completely reversed the war. A common myth, completely untrue, is that General MacArthur, by military action, pressured Washington and Lake Success into the decision to continue to the north. Actually, though his orders gave him sufficient latitude to conduct tactical operations north of the parallel, he held fast below it until the United Nations resolution authorizing unification was approved on October 7. Five days before the resolution, when General MacArthur proposed that the crossing be the occasion for the issuance of a dramatic announcement, Washington instructed him to "proceed with your operations without any further explanation or announcement and let action determine the matter. Our government desires to avoid having to make an issue of the 38th Parallel until we have accomplished our mission." The implication that Washington was attempting to "put one over" on the United Nations, and present them then with a fait accompli, made General MacArthur raise his eyebrows.[65] But regardless of Washington's maneuverings, the later criticism from abroad that the Chinese intervention was the result of a foolish American demand for total military victory is belied by the overwhelming forty-seven to five vote (seven abstentions) in favor of the United Nations resolution.[66] By these actions the political objective of the war in Korea had been changed from the restoration of the status quo ante to a permanent change in that

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[65] Whitney, p. 399.

[66] Goodrich, p. 132; and Spanier, p. 102.

status quo; from destruction of the enemy's army to destruction of his state.

In retrospect it appears that the full significance of the thirty-eighth parallel as a symbol of limited war was not appreciated. The enlargement of the political objective seems to be a classic example of "how to decide without actually choosing," or at least of a decision made because it seemed like the desirable, logical, easily obtainable course, without full consideration of its implications. As Secretary Acheson so aptly put it, it was a "target of opportunity." The objective was increased in expectation of an easy victory, and when this was denied by the "new war" launched by Communist China, we were beyond the depth of our immediate plans, and again caught without a comprehensive limited war strategy. In expanding our political objective without full appreciation of its implications, we neglected to consider the extent of the psychological and prestige commitments made. We gambled on the Chinese Communists not attacking. When they called our bluff, we decided the price was too high and were not willing to back our play, not recognizing that the psychological price of this retreat both internationally and in terms of domestic public opinion, might be greater than the military price of holding fast to the unification objective. This is not to say, categorically, that the objective either should or should not have been expanded, but only that the interrelationship between objectives and limits was not clearly perceived, and that the increase in the former should not have been undertaken unless we were willing to escalate the latter correspondingly.

The indecision did not end here, however. This was only the first of three shifts of objective. The second occurred in the dark days of December, 1950, as the United Nations forces reeled south under violent attack, demoralized and heavily outnumbered. At this point it was no longer clear what our policy was, but quite clear that it wasn't unification. The basic aim seemed to be saving our forces from slaughter, and the plans to accomplish this ran full scale from evacuation of the peninsula to the adoption of General MacArthur's earlier proposals to carry the war to China. As the early panic subsided, the goals stabilized on a defensive plane--inflict maximum damage on the enemy, withdraw to successive lines of defense as the communist attack increased in intensity, and finally evacuate to Japan if necessary. At this point, since "victory" in the military sense was no longer a possibility in Washington's view, the President made a monumental effort to explain to General MacArthur, in a lengthy message, what was being accomplished by our resistance in Korea.[67] In the Theater Commander's opinion, these generalizations were not adequate goals for men engaged in combat, to whom "the political basis on which they are asked to trade life for time . . . [must be] quickly delineated, fully understood and so impelling that the hazards of battle are cheerfully accepted."[68]

When it became apparent, after the success of "Operation Killer" inaugurated by General Matthew B. Ridgway in January, 1951, that we would not have to evacuate, and that the present United

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[67] The message is quoted in Truman, II, 435-38.

[68] Whitney, p. 435.

Nations force levels and action prohibitions could achieve no more than a stalemate, truce because the new objective. The first hint of this had come a month earlier in the December 5 communiqué that ended the Truman-Attlee conference: "For our part, we are ready, as we have always been, to seek an end to the hostilities by means of negotiation." After having once been cursed, Washington and the allies had no intention of allowing a second crusade for unification to be made, and it was in the policy differences over this issue that General MacArthur was relieved in April, 1951. The Administration embarked upon a campaign to sell the respectability of a negotiated truce to a divided public and a divided Congress, even to the extent of repudiating the original shift to a "unite Korea" offensive. It was explained by Secretary Acheson that while a unified Korea was desired by the United States and the United Nations, this was not a war aim, and was to be achieved by peaceful means, not by fighting.[69] General Ridgway slowly pushed the communists back to the parallel, and, as Henry A. Kissinger has so well phrased it, "the attempt by both sides to achieve a position of strength prior to negotiation . . . was brought to a halt only because an equilibrium was gradually established between the physical inability of Communist China to invest more resources in the conflict and our psychological unwillingness to do so."[70] The restoration of the status quo was the last objective, as it had been the first, only the emphasis was now primarily on terminating the struggle as rapidly as possible.

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[69] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 1729.

[70] Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, p. 5[illegible].

General Mark W. Clark who took over the Far East Command in May, 1952, stated he was given "neither the authority nor the military resources to achieve victory. I was instructed, rather, to bend every effort toward realizing an armistice quickly."[71]

General MacArthur's Position

A host of works have been written on the Truman-MacArthur controversy, and it is not the intent here to analyze the subject further, except as it relates to limited war thinking. While it is not generally realized, General MacArthur, as well as the Administration, advocated fighting a limited war in Korea. He, too, strongly opposed either expanding the objectives beyond Korea, or employing unlimited military force in achieving these objectives.[72] He opposed any ground force action beyond the Manchurian border. He opposed heavy air strikes at the purported center of aggression in Russia. He opposed the bombing of the Chinese supply lines leading to Russia. He opposed any use of atomic weapons anywhere. There was, however, a substantial area of disagreement between General MacArthur and the Administration on measures to take short of the above steps. Having been given the unification of Korea as his objective in October, 1950, he felt that abandonment of this objective in the face of enemy action, when its attainment was possible at reasonable cost, was tantamount to defeat.[73] Since Communist China was in the war it

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[71] Mark W. Clark, From the Danube to the Yalu (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 59.

[72] See, e.g., Senate, MacArthur Hearings, pp. 146-47, 167-68. An excellent discussion of General MacArthur's limits is contained in Osgood, Limited War, pp. 173-78.

[73] In an address in Boston before the Massachusetts Legislature on July 25, 1951, General MacArthur stated: "It can be accepted as

was incomprehensible to him that her territory should be immune from attack. In fact, he felt this logic was incomprehensible to the Chinese as well, and that they would never have entered the war had they not been told in advance that retaliation against China would not be permitted, a fact of which even he was unaware before their entry.[74] He regarded as a "glaring inconsistency" the Joint Chiefs of Staff message that military action against Communist China would be in order only if that country attacked our forces outside Korea.[75] In the subsequent hearings he termed the limitations under which he had operated as the introduction of "a new concept in military operations--the concept of appeasement."[76]

But beyond our need for gaining in the Oriental mind the prestige that goes to the victor, General MacArthur felt that the global power struggle was here at stake. In his letter to Joseph W. Martin, the House Minority Leader, which precipitated his dismissal, he wrote:

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a basic principle proven and reproven since the beginning of time that a great nation which enters upon war and fails to see it through to victory must accept the full moral consequences of defeat." New York Times, July 26, 1951, p. 12.

[74] Whitney, pp. 373-74, 455-57. MacArthur attributes the betrayal to British traitors Guy Burgess and Donald MacLean. The same opinion is advanced by the Chief of the Intelligence Section (G2) of General MacArthur's Far Eastern Headquarters, Major General Charles A. Willoughby. See Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, MacArthur: 1941-1951 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1954), pp. 400-403.

[75] Whitney, p. 435.

[76] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 39.

> It seems strangely difficult for some to realize that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest, and that we have joined the issue thus raised on the battlefield; that here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words; that if we lose the war to communism in Asia the fall of Europe is inevitable, win it and Europe most probably would avoid war and yet preserve freedom. As you pointed out, we must win. There is no substitute for victory.[77]

To unify Korea, and to protect it from future aggression, the United Nations must, General MacArthur argued, "severely cripple and largely neutralize China's capability to wage aggressive war." As a by-product, this action would "save Asia from the engulfment otherwise facing it."[78] To accomplish this objective, he advocated not unlimited force but a blockade of the coast of China, destruction of China's industrial capacity by naval gun fire and air bombardment, reinforcement of his troops in Korea by Chinese Nationalists from Formosa, and "diversionary action possibly leading to counter-invasion" by Chiang Kai-shek against the mainland.[79] The General discounted the Administration's fears of expansion of the war through similar escalation of action by the communists. He pointed out that China was already committed to the utmost; and that Soviet intervention would depend on the Politburo's own estimate of the global power balance, and would be independent of our action against China.[80] To the Administration's fears of overcommitment

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[77] U. S., Congressional Record, 82d Cong., 1st Sess. 1951, XCVII, Part 3, 3631.

[78] An excerpt from what General Whitney terms "probably MacArthur's most important single statement on the Korean war." (His December 30, 1950 message to the JCS). See Whitney, pp. 472-73.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., and Senate, MacArthur Hearings, pp. 9, 69, 130-31, 138, and 734-41.

here resulting in inability to respond to Soviet challenges in Europe or elsewhere, he replied:

> You have got a war on your hands, and you can't just say, "Let that war go on indefinitely while I prepare for some other war." . . . Does your global plan for defense of this United States . . . consist of permitting war indefinitely to go on in the Pacific?[81]

He recognized that it would be a gamble, that there were risks involved, but he felt that this was true in any international situation of conflict. In this case he believed the opportunity to inflict a limited but severe defeat on the Sino-Soviet bloc was so great, and the deterrent power of our air-atomic striking force was so positive, that the risks had to be taken.[82]

What General MacArthur did not recognize, and seems never to have fully understood, was that the weight that tipped the scale in favor of the Administration's plan was the rejection of his proposals on military grounds by his military superiors. What he regarded as introducing "into the military sphere a political control such as I have never known in my life,"[83] was in large measure a professional military overruling of his professional military judgement. During the hearings, Secretary Acheson summed up the Administration's case as follows:

> What this adds up to it seems to me, is that we are being asked to undertake a large risk of general war with China, risk of war with the Soviet Union, and a demonstrable weakening of our collective security system--all of this in return for what?
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> In return for measures whose effectiveness in bringing the conflict to an early conclusion are

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[81] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, pp. 75-76.

[82] Ibid., pp. 75-80, 83, and 120.

[83] Ibid., p. 40.

> judged doubtful by our responsible military authorities.[84]

The "responsible military authorities," Secretary of Defense Marshall and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified for almost a month to the general thesis that the Theater Commander's program was militarily impracticable, would prove indecisive, and would result in the expansion of a small stalemate into a large stalemate that could "bleed us dry."[85] Even a slight escalation of force by the communists, such as bombing of Inchon or Pusan, our two main supply centers in Korea, or air strikes against Japan, or submarine and air action against our naval forces, could hurt us inordinately.[86] In receiving similar conservative views in Korea, General MacArthur had rejected them as "political meddling by inexperienced statesmen," and it was this concept to which he overreacted with the statement:

> The general definition which for many decades has been accepted was that war was the ultimate process of politics; that when all other political means failed, you then go to force; and when you do that, the balance of control . . . is the control of the military. . . . I do unquestionably state that when men become locked in battle, that there should be no artifice under the name of politics, which should . . . decrease their chances for winning . . . .[87]

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[84] Ibid., p. 1720.

[85] Excellent summaries of this extensive testimony are contained in Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 306-08, and Spanier, pp. 289-90.

[86] Kaplan suggests that possibly the air-atomic philosophy within the Pentagon was so strong, and limited war thinking so deficient, that the Joint Chiefs of Staff overrated the risks involved and underestimated the military worth of General MacArthur's recommendations. Limited War, p. 182.

[87] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 45.

While this statement taken by itself places General MacArthur in a position removed by light years from the limited war camp, a thoughtful appraisal of his actions in Korea, and a review of his entire testimony at the hearings, reveal that his differences with the Administration were those of degree, involving the global significance of the conflict, an analysis of communist responses, and the military efficacy of different courses of action.

Strategy Lessons of the Korean War

The unfortunate immediate psychological aftermath of the Korean war tended to obscure some of the valuable lessons in strategy that it taught; however, they have been there from the outset for the perceptive student of war and are coming more increasingly into focus as immediate involvement in the conflict fades and it can be seen in proper perspective. The most important lesson is the fact of the Korean war itself--proof positive that limited wars can indeed be fought in the nuclear age, "that great-power rivals occasionally prefer to test each other's strength and resolution with limited rather than unlimited commitments to violence."[88] Likewise, Korea proved there can be little doubt of the value of being able to fight limited wars, for while it undoubtedly would have been better had we unified Korea, it would have been inconceivably worse not to have intervened at all.

A second lesson, learned the hard way, is that in spite of having a modicum of ready military force in June, 1950, we were completely unprepared for waging limited war, materially, doctrinally, and psychologically.

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[88] Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, p. 330.

Our ground forces were woefully weak, poorly trained and inadequately equipped. In many times the fundamental qualities of good fighting infantrymen, which the primitive conditions in Korea raised to supreme importance, seemed conspicuous by their absence in American units. Our tactical air support proved poor, probably due in large measure to the past overconcentration on the strategic air command. Our mobility, sea and air, was lacking in almost every respect, quantity, speed, capacity, flexibility. In terms of total military might we were dangerously overcommitted from the first engagement. Korea showed us, as nothing else could, the need for maintaining a sizable balanced defense force, well-equipped and trained, and with almost instant mobility. A return to pre-Korea defense budgets was never thereafter seriously considered.

Doctrinally, the Korean war started a revolution that is still underway. While this conflict did not produce a workable limited war strategy, it nonetheless left the jerry-built postwar strategy in shambles and pointed the way to the future. Although this road was subsequently closed temporarily by the "massive retaliation" roadblock, the power of the Korean lesson was such as to clear the way eventually. The rigidity of our strategy in Korea, which seemed to reduce most decision areas to a Hobbesian choice between two poor alternatives--e.g., stalemate or total war, status quo ante bellum or unconditional surrender, allied effort or go it alone--was, in the final analysis the root cause of the unpleasant outcome.

Psychologically, Korea caught Americans completely by surprise. We did not understand it while it was underway, and understood it even less in the difficult months of truce negotiations. For the

first time in our history we had entered a war in bewilderment, not in a moral crusade. The alternatives in which it ended--total war or protracted humiliating negotiation with international bandits --were both too unpleasant to be countenanced. We did not understand, as Senator Alexander Smith said, the idea of "stopping where we began,"[89] of apparently accomplishing nothing, at least nothing tangible. The whole idea of limited war, of fighting for, dying for, and finally settling for, objectives short of total victory, was completely new to America, and the rapid shifting of Korean objectives by the Administration vastly aggravated what would have been a slow and painful assimilation in any case. Korea, and the politically inspired hearings that accompanied it, left in their wake a divided country; but out of this traumatic experience emerged a clear and unequivocal truth: the country must be educated to the rationale of limited wars, must be prepared and willing to fight them if necessary, and must be kept informed of, and accept, the objectives which demand national sacrifices.

A third major category into which the lessons learned in Korea can be divided deals with politico-military, or civil-military, relations. One of the most fundamental tenets of American democracy has traditionally been civilian control of the military. In the past, belief in this principle went almost unquestioned, and few had any doubts as to its durability. The changing nature of war, and the loss of the geographic protection that has guarded us since the nation's birth, has now asserted a new factor in the equation, which was first seen in Korea. In limited war, by nature,

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[89] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 1786.

compatible with continued civilian control of the military? Can an administration maintain sufficient control over a field commander to insure the limiting process, yet not hopelessly interfere with his conduct of the battle? Can military response be kept sufficiently flexible that a field commander will not be forced to expand the war by the dictates of "military necessity?" While General MacArthur firmly maintained that the civil administration was, and should be, in "complete control," and that usurpation by a military commander was a "treasonable concept," he nevertheless stated:

> A theater commander, in any campaign, is not merely limited to a handling of his troops; he commands that whole area politically, economically, and militarily . . . . At that stage of the game when politics fails, and the military takes over, you must trust the military . . .[90]

Not only from this statement, but from the tenor of the General's entire testimony at the hearings, as well as his conduct of the war, one sees cause for grave concern over the answers to the above questions. Is this a characteristic of all limited wars, of Korea, or only of General MacArthur? Analysis of this problem in Korea makes one wonder how we managed to salvage as much as we did. Relations between the Commander in Chief in Washington and the Far East Commander were, except for the first few months, virtually impossible. Instead of mutual confidence, trust, exchange of information, and concert on intentions there was suspicion, evasion, distrust, and complete lack of teamwork and sympathy of viewpoint. Specific examples are almost endless, stretching from General MacArthur's Formosa visit in July, 1950, to his letter to Minority Leader Martin in April 1951, which brought about his

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[90] Ibid., p. 45.

relief. Aside from the disastrous effects these differences had upon the conduct of the war, the political crisis ignited in this country by General MacArthur's frequent attempts to go over the head of the President and appeal to the people was damaging in the extreme. In his address to the Massachusetts Legislature, General MacArthur expressed what must have been his rationale for these actions:

> I find in existence a new and heretofore unknown and dangerous concept that the members of our Armed services owe primary allegiance or loyalty to those who temporarily exercise the authority of the Executive Branch of the Government rather than to the country and its Constitution which they are sworn to defend.
>
> No proposition could be more dangerous.[91]

Obviously, if America is going to be able to fight limited wars, without which the future of the country seems dim, and if we are going to be able to retain civilian control of the military, without which the future of democracy seems dim, the type of situation seen in Korea cannot be permitted to develop again. Military leaders must be fully indoctrinated with the theory of limited war, and must be sympathetic to it, overcoming their inbred antipathy to restraint. Civil authorities, on the other hand, must develop a far greater appreciation of the military commander's problems. Failure to do this will almost certainly guarantee failure in war, for a dissatisfied commander could easily muster substantial support within the opposition party and among that segment of the public that is temperamentally opposed to anything short of total victory. Partisan politics being what it is, the Taft-Martin efforts to discredit the Truman Administration over

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[91] New York Times, July 26, 1951, p. 12.

Korea will probably seem only a tame preview of future efforts in the same vein, and while this is a necessary aspect of the democratic method of government, the involvement of the professional military in the process would be dangerous in the extreme.[32] Korea showed us clearly that in the future, as never before in the past, an atmosphere of complete rapport and teamwork between Washington and the field commander is a sine qua non of limited war.

One of the most profound lessons arising from our Korean experience came not from the war, but from the peace negotiations. It was here that we made our cardinal mistake of the entire conflict, in grasping at the first hint of willingness to negotiate and relaxing our military pressure. Throughout the war we had almost instinctively followed the practice, vital to limited war, of maintaining diplomatic contact with the communists and keeping our lines of communication with them open. We were not so wise in our use of this contact, however, for on June 23, 1951, when the Russian delegate to the United Nations, Jacob Malik, intimated in a radio speech that the Soviet Union was ready for a cease-fire in Korea, our distaste for an unpopular war and our intense desire to bring what seemed like senseless killing to a close was so strong that we forgot or ignored the basic tenet of diplomacy, not divorced force from negotiation. As we halted our offensive and removed military pressure from the communists, we also removed the incentive they had to negotiate. We knew now that the Communist Chinese army

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[32] In this Walter Lippmann sees "the beginnings of an altogether intolerable thing in a republic--namely a schism within the armed forces between the generals of the Democratic party and the generals of the Republican party." New York Herald Tribune, April 30, 1951, p. 17.

facing us in June, 1951, was "in a truly desperate condition, undergoing large-scale defections."[93] General James A. Van Fleet, Eighth Army Commander at the time, believed that the communists were defeated and that the United Nations forces could have overwhelmed them.[94] In the views of General Clark and Admiral C. Turner Joy, Commander of Naval Forces, Far East, victory would have been possible with an acceptable increase in effort.[95] Further offensive action was not permitted, however, and a bitter, humiliating two-year "armistice" struggle ensued, under conditions ideal for the communists, during which our casualty list mounted steadily, probably reaching greater proportions than it would have in an accelerated offensive to end the war by driving the communists north. The price we paid for this mistake, beyond that in lives, was an unsatisfactory truce settlement and a public opinion violently antithetical to limited war.

In surveying the problems we faced in the Korean War, one questions the advisability of calling on allies to assist us in

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[93] Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, p. 318. Brodie's source is the POW interrogation work of Dr. Herbert Goldhamer of the RAND Corporation. Bearing this out is General Clark's statement: "Of the twenty thousand Chinese Communist soldiers we had captured in Korea, fifteen thousand said they would rather die than return to Communism." Clark, p. 75.

[94] New York Times, February 10, 1953, p. 2, and also "The Truth about Korea," Life, May 11, 1953, pp. 126-42, and May 18, 1953, pp. 156-72.

[95] Clark, pp. 69, 82; and C. Turner Joy, How Communists Negotiate (New York: Macmillan Co., 1955), pp. 166, 175-76. General Ridgway, on the other hand, believes a drive to the Yalu would not have been worth the cost, from a purely military standpoint. Ridgway, pp. 219-20. A drive to the narrow Wonsan-Pyongyang neck would have been a different matter, however, both militarily, in terms of ease of defense, and as a lever to speed negotiations and gain better terms.

future limited wars. The restriction on freedom of action, the friction developed between friends, the command and supply difficulties, all hamper effective action. The close kinship developed among allies engaged in an all-out battle for survival and suffering common adversities seems not to be a characteristic of limited war. Furthermore, the entry of allies into an active conflict might expand rather than limit the war. Based on this one experience, Martin Lichterman's advice seems sound when he counsels:

> Unless our allies' interests are clearly involved, it may be better to fight limited conflicts on our own. It is far better to permit our friends to husband their strength and resources on the sidelines--a useful deterrent in itself--and have them available to serve as intermediaries when either belligerent appears ready to negotiate a settlement.[96]

Finally, from the cauldron of Korea we have distilled a number of strange brews relating to the military aspects of future limited wars. In the broad strategy field, it is hard to avoid concluding that even a vastly inferior deterrent force can actually deter, for certainly a major restraint on our use of atomic weapons was fear of Soviet atomic retaliation, although the Russians had few bombs and practically no long-range bombers. The complete moratorium on atomic weapons in this titanic struggle hits hard at those who proclaim that they will invariably be used in any future conflict, and suggests that we must prepare as much for their non-use as for their use. The concept of sanctuary, a throwback to the ancient "open cities," was busted all to hell and emerged rejuvenated from Korea.[97] The central importance of ground forces, and the

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[96] Lichterman, in Turner and Challener, p. 56.

[97] See Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, pp. 328-29, for a good discussion of this point.

corresponding relegation of air power to an ancillary role, together with the reproved validity of the basic, old-fashioned, tactical maxims, seem indisputable for future limited wars. The rotation scheme for combat troops, designed to provide a just solution to the problem of a limited war too large for the professional military but too small for total mobilization, performed well and seemed destined to become a hall mark of the age of limited wars. It produced a completely different breed of soldier from that of the world wars--a man who fights, as a professional does, because he is told to fight, not because he identifies himself completely with the political goal of the war. The difficulties we experienced in spite of the magnificent performance of the South Korean forces pointed ominously to the near impossibility of fighting a limited war among an indigenous population not so fervently imbued with the will to resist. Almost transcending all of these, however, was the recognized need for a better understanding of the enemy. Our early view of the aggression as a Russian ruse to unmask us in the wrong theater, our shift to the idea that the Politburo wanted an excuse for starting a world war, our estimate of the likelihood of Chinese intervention, our excessive touchiness over the possibility of Soviet entry into the war, our appraisal of Chinese military capabilities at the time of the negotiations, and many other major judgments now seem to have been mistaken. Unless we can improve our intelligence assessments, in both the capabilities and the intentions categories, the limited war future seems dark.

Results of the Korean War

Some of the lessons of Korea discussed above were apparent immediately; many, however, were obscured for a time by the profoundly disturbed psychological aftermath of the war, which

produced some anomalous results. The deep internal schisms and political conflicts that represent part of the cost of Korea muddied the strategy waters and produced such aberrations as a rejection of limited war and a strengthened faith in atomic air power. One of the administration's strongest points in the MacArthur hearings, concisely expounded by Secretary Acheson, was that time was on our side; yet one of the results of concluding the war as the Administration wished to see it concluded was that we were too divided to make effective use of that time. New strategies appeared by the score, ranging from preventive atomic war to a withdrawal to "fortress America," and the phenomenon of McCarthyism swept the land, feeding on the deep passions aroused by Korea.

The political division that inspired the MacArthur hearings continued, and while these debates had not generated enough public pressure to reverse the Administration's course for a quick negotiated end to hostilities, they nonetheless provided the Republicans with a vast store of political ammunition, which was used effectively in the 1952 national election. There can be little doubt that popular dissatisfaction with the entire Korean affair was a significant factor in ending a twenty-year Democratic monopoly on the White House. In analyzing this result, and considering the relationship of partisan politics and limited wars, Herman Kahn perceptively--and disturbingly--concludes: "It is quite clear that if there is another unpopular limited war followed by the loss of the ensuing national election by the party in power, the ability of the United States to fight limited wars will be sadly impaired."[98]

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[98]Kahn, p. 418.

The general frustration and distaste left by the Korean stalemate, combined with the heavy expense of the war and the prognostication of even bigger defense budgets to come, led inexorably to the clamor for a new and better strategy, for defense department reorganization, and for fiscal retrenchment; and with the Republican party swept into office with a popular mandate to "change things," massive retaliation followed Korea "as the night the day."

But all the results were not on the negative side. Aggression had been met and turned back, and the Republic of Korea was restored to its prewar boundaries. An enlarged conflict had been avoided, as had the scourge of nuclear warfare. The expansive forces of communism had been tied down for three years and terribly decimated, giving the remainder of Asia a vital breather in which to develop a degree of political stability.[99] The unity of the allies had been preserved, their bonds of friendship tightened by the overt communist action, and their military power vastly increased through a steady rearmament program. Collective security received a strong shot in the arm, with the ANZUS Pact and the security treaties with Japan and the Philippines being only the first three of a series of interlocking defense agreements inspired by Korea.[100] New life was breathed into a failing United Nations, and the common effort in Korea was seen as the salvation of the concept of international organization and collective security. Most important,

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[99] See Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, pp. 242-43, for an excellent discussion of the frustration of Stalin's Asian plans by the deadlock in Korea.

[100] These treaties envisaged defense by strategic retaliation, not by local resistance.

all this had been done without dissipation of our military power in a peripheral struggle.

The great hope was that through this type of effort, continued frustration of Soviet aims would result in the Russians' adopting a more compromising attitude, for, as Kennan expressed it, "no mystical, Messianic movement--and particularly not that of the Kremlin--can face frustration indefinitely without eventually adjusting itself in one way or another to the logic of that state of affairs."[101] As Secretary Acheson saw it:

> . . . what we must do is to create situations of strength; . . . then I think that the whole situation in the world begins to change so far as the potentialities of the Soviet Union being able to achieve its present purposes is concerned; and with that change there comes a difference in the negotiating positions of the various parties, and out of that I should hope there would be a willingness on the side of the Kremlin to recognize the facts which have been created by this effort of ours and begin to solve at least some of the difficulties between east and west.[102]

Parallel Trends

During the Korean years several actions were taken which affected our limited war strategy but did not fit entirely within the context of that war. These more global considerations will be examined briefly below, to provide the background for the Eisenhower policies.

Shortly after the conflict started, General Marshall was called from retirement to replace Louis Johnson as Secretary of Defense. The bad blood that had developed between Secretary Johnson and Secretary of State Acheson had carried over into

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[101] [Kennan], Foreign Affairs, XXV, No. 4, 582.

[102] Senate, MacArthur Hearings, p. 2083.

departmental relations, and close State-Defense harmony was seen as vital if we were to fight a limited war.[103] Beyond this, however, the fact that Louis Johnson had, for the past year, presided over a liquidation of American military might made him singularly ill-equipped to direct the massive buildup that was forthcoming.

With the explosion in Korea, and the sudden realization of our low state of preparedness for the more deadly global peril, the Administration's budget ceilings went by the board. The real fear was not defeat in Korea but World War III, and the massive rearmament was only incidently aimed at providing augmented forces for General MacArthur. The Administration submitted one supplemental budget after another, and Congress, abandoning its customary minute scrutiny of particulars, voted the money as fast as it was requested and in some cases increased it. By January, 1951, the fiscal year 1951 defense budget, which had been forced down to $13.5 billion only one year before, now stood at $52 billion, and the 1952 military expenditures were programed at $61 billion plus all billion for the Mutual Defense Assistance Program.[104] The following report of the Secretary of Defense, submitted at the close of fiscal year 1952, summarizes what this money purchased:

> We reached the manpower goals established for the close of fiscal year 1952 increasing the personnel strength of the armed forces two and a half times in the space of 2 years and the combat efficiency of fighting units to a marked degree. The Army has

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[103] The Marshall-Acheson relationship proved ideal for fostering the type of inter-agency cooperation essential to a war effort, particularly a limited war effort.

[104] Millis chronicles the skyrocketing climb of the defense and NSF budgets well in Arms and the State, pp. 333-54.

> grown from 10 divisions and 11 regimental combat teams--all at less than peacetime manning levels and without operational supporting units--to a force of 20 divisions and 18 regimental combat teams, the great majority of which is combat-worthy. The Army's military personnel increased from nearly 600,000 to almost 1,600,000. The Navy expanded its personnel from less than 400,000 to about 800,000 and its warships from 200 to 400. It doubled the number of its big carriers and added seven carrier groups to its air arm. The Marine Corps increased from 75,000 men to more than 230,000 organized into 3 divisions and 3 air wings. The Air Force grew from 48 groups to 95 wings on the way to its goal of 143 wings and was manned on June 30, 1952 by 960,000 officers and men as compared to a little more than 400,000 two years earlier.[105]

The rearmament program reached beyond our own military, however. The Mutual Defense Assistance Program was greatly expanded, particularly for aid to NATO countries. Greater military commitments from NATO members were urged, and the United States contingent in Europe was increased from two to six divisions to prime the pump.[106] The hope was to move beyond the "trip wire" concept and eventually develop a NATO ground force that could, in itself, deter, and if necessary defend, Europe against a Soviet Army assault. It was seen that this could not be accomplished without a German contribution, so the early 1950s also saw the beginning moves of the German rearmament drive.

A significant weapons development of these years deserves mention--the birth of tactical nuclear weapons. The first government efforts to explore the possibilities of these weapons in

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105 U. S., Department of Defense, Semiannual Report of the Secretary of Defense, January 1 - June 30, 1952, pp. 2-3.

106 This move created quite a partisan stir in Congress, as is well illustrated in U. S., Congress, Senate, Committees on Foreign Relations and Armed Services, Hearings, Assignment of Ground Forces of the United States to Duty in the European Area, 82d Cong., 1st Sess., 1951.

limited war began in 1949, when Project Vista was inaugurated at the California Institute of Technology.[107] Some glimpses of this classified joint Army-Navy-Air Force project can be seen in the Oppenheimer hearings. By 1949 the problem was under study by the weapons system evaluation group, but actual progress, according to General Gavin, was being delayed by Air Force reluctance to see scarce fissionable material diverted from strategic use.[108] Under the stimulus of Korea, Project Vista progressed rapidly, with inspection trips to the battle front proving conclusively to the scientists and advisers the feasibility of "bringing the battle back to the battlefield" with tactical nuclear weapons, and the great advantages of their use to a commander in the field. The report of the Project was submitted in February, 1952, but due to strong Air Force opposition, as well as the fact that Dr. Oppenheimer had participated importantly in its development, it was never approved by the government.[109] Regardless of approval, however, action on most recommendations has progressed rapidly, silent testimony of the weight and power of the Korean lesson.

The final development chronicled here, and marking a fitting conclusion to this turbulent era of world history, and to the Truman years, was the explosion of our first thermonuclear device at Eniwetok on November 1, 1952. Little was known at first of the

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[107] Morton H. Halperin, "Nuclear Weapons and Limited War," Journal of Conflict Resolution, V, No. 2 (June, 1961), 147.

[108] Gavin, pp. 113-14, 132-39.

[109] See "The Hidden Struggle for the H-bomb," Fortune, XLVII, No. 5 (May, 1953), 107-10; and Tom Lucia's editorial, "Atoms on Trial," The Reporter, December 20, 1957, pp. 8-9.

awesome power of this super weapon, but the reverberations from that explosion were to echo through the halls of strategy in coming years with an intensity unequalled even by those of the atomic bomb.

CHAPTER IV

THE LEAN YEARS OF THE NEW LOOK, 1953-1960

Introduction

The Korean war had a paradoxical effect on communist and American strategies. For the communists, the failure to achieve their goals in Korea, combined with the devastating loss of Chinese troops in the spring of 1951, resulted in a softening in their aggressive tactics. It was readily apparent to Moscow and Peking that direct aggression did not pay nearly as well as did the more subtle methods of diplomatic and ideological competition, political subversion, and, in carefully chosen areas, arms shipments and guerrilla warfare by local communists. After the death of Stalin in March, 1953, this communist shift to non-military tactics was accelerated.

In America the opposite trend took effect, with heavy emphasis being placed upon ringing the communist central position with sufficient military might to prevent a second Korea. Democrats and Republicans reacted in different ways to this threat. As was developed in the preceding chapter, the Democratic response was a crash military rearmament and expansion program, designed to prepare the United States for the "crisis" year of 1954, the theoretical point of maximum danger. This effort was not centered about a new limited war strategy, for none had yet evolved, but was basically a "hardware and manpower" increase. It still

concentrated on Europe, and it still depended heavily on the power of nuclear weapons, now the devastating H-bomb, but it did include a vast increase in conventional arms and ground forces as well. In the Pacific the Democrats were well on their way to the development of military defense pacts ringing the Far Eastern perimeter, and military assistance to such areas as Vietnam and Indochina was stepped up at the expense of economic and technological aid. Korea had caused our containment strategy to shift heavily to the military side of the spectrum.

The Republicans, on the other hand, interpreted Korea somewhat differently, and when Dwight D. Eisenhower took office a marked strategic shift occurred which continued, with variations around a central theme, for eight years. The pattern of this shift, and its oscillations over the course of two terms in office, are the subject of this chapter.

The Republican Mandate

Throughout the years of mounting public dissatisfaction after World War II--years which saw the rise of the cold war, the loss of China, the growing power of Russia, and the "debacle" of Korea--the Republican party had become the rallying point for people with many differing views.

One dominant theme was the aversion to containment. The profound popular distaste over Korea crystallized into a violent rejection of containment, the policy that would lead us into endless inconclusive peripheral wars of attrition until our economy was drained. "Ours are treadmill policies," charged Mr. Dulles, "which, at best, might perhaps keep us in the same place until we

drop exhausted."[1] The Republican platform in 1952 went even further, branding containment a "negative, futile, and immoral policy."[2] Likewise limited war, as an instrument of containment, was blamed for our troubles in Korea, and instead of reassessing our strategic doctrine the tendency was to ascribe our difficulties to a departure from our traditional policy.[3] A related current of public opinion, drawing support from General MacArthur's charges at the Congressional hearings, associated containment and coexistence with appeasement, and called for a "tougher" policy toward communism. It was the domestic crest of this wave that Senator McCarthy rode to notoriety, but its foreign applications were more significant in determining future military policy. Finally, to complete the confused jumble of standards in the Republican camp, was the loud and anguished demand for a significant reduction in the ever-increasing level of military expenditures. Faced with the seemingly irreconcilable aims of more defense at less cost, the Republicans embarked on several radical new courses, which eventually were to converge in the "massive retaliation" policy and the "new look."

As an alternative to the "immoral" policy of containment, the Republican party, with General Eisenhower as its standard bearer and John Foster Dulles as its master planner, campaigned under a banner variously described as "rollback" or "liberation." It envisaged a shift from the "static" policy of containment to a "dynamic," positive, policy, a "psychological and political

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[1] John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness," Life, May 19, 1952, p. 146.

[2] New York Times, July 11, 1952, p. 8.

[3] Ensinger, Bulletin Interest and Foreign Policy, p. 54.

offensive," a "great crusade--for freedom in America and freedom in the world." It was well-calculated to play on the emotions of those disillusioned by Korea, as well as on the traditional American self-image. Typical of the Republican pledges was General Eisenhower's speech before the American Legion convention in August, 1952, in which, speaking of the peoples of eastern Europe who had been forcibly annexed to the Soviet Union, he said:

> The American conscience can never know peace until these people are restored again to being masters of their own fate.
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> Not only in eastern Europe has communist barbarism broken forth beyond its own borders. In its Asiatic periphery the Kremlin has made captive China and Tibet, Inner Mongolia, North Korea, Northern Japan, the northern half of Indo China its slaves. It has added five hundred million people to its arsenal manpower.
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> . . . .
>
> We can never rest--and we must so inform all the world, including the Kremlin--that until the enslaved nations of the world have in the fullness of freedom the right to choose their own path, that then and only then can we say that there is a possible way of living peacefully and permanently with communism in the world.[4]

Not only in the campaign, but after taking office, as, for example, in his state of the Union message of February 2, 1953, and his major foreign policy speech of April 16, 1953, did President Eisenhower clearly set the sights of his administration beyond containment.[5]

The Dulles-Eisenhower team, however, regarded liberation as an ultimate goal, not as a concrete plan to be implemented. Mr.

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[4] New York Times, August 26, 1952, p. 12.

[5] For a development of this idea, from the conservative point of view, see William Henry Chamberlin, Beyond Containment (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953), chap. xv, et passim.

Dulles had even specifically stated: "We do not want a series of bloody uprisings and reprisals."[6] This idea, however, was lost in the welter of campaign oratory, particularly that of other party spokesmen, and when the Berlin riots in June, 1953, received no more extensive American support than food packages, the shock of the "liberation-oriented" public was so great that the administration allowed "rollback" to die a quiet death, and reverted, unannounced, to the containment policy of its predecessor. Any faint hopes that remained in the hearts of the "great crusaders" were completely quenched by our failure to support the Polish and Hungarian uprisings of 1956. But if the liberation policy of the new Republican Administration was an early casualty, other policies were more persistent.

The commitment to economy could well be regarded as the prime mover of all Republican plans and strategies--the independent element which determined the form of the various equations involving dependent variables. The first salvo had been fired the year before, when Senator Bush of Connecticut had, in a thunderous speech on September 18, 1951, called for a vast increase in atomic weapons coupled with a major cut in overall military expenditures, to achieve "peace power at bearable cost." He could foresee only two possible outcomes of our present path, "military safety at the price of economic disaster or economic safety at the price of military disaster."[7] From this point on, through the months of mounting defense expenditures, the Republican clamor for retrench-

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[6] Dulles, Life, May 19, 1952, p. 157.

[7] U. S., Congressional Record, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 1951, XCVII, Part 9, 11496-99.

ment and a balanced budget snowballed. General Eisenhower was the perfect choice for a candidate, for with his prestige as a popular military hero, as the conqueror of Europe, behind a call for lower defense costs, who could question the military wisdom of this course. With his speech at Baltimore in the last week of September, 1952, General Eisenhower placed himself squarely in the "security with solvency" camp.

Thus as the Republican party assumed the reins of government they were deeply committed to two courses, a tougher policy toward communism and a more certain defense on one hand, and a reduction of expenditures and a balanced budget on the other. The resolution of these seemingly mutually exclusive goals was to lead inexorably to massive retaliation, and away from the limited war capability that Korea had painfully proven necessary.

Budgetary Actions

One of the first acts of the new Administration was to shift our rearmament effort from the "year of crisis" to the "long pull" approach, or, as it was been called, to the "concept of a floating D-Day." The rapid buildup of NATO forces was spread out, and military procurement programs were phased into the future. These actions were clearly outlined by President Eisenhower in his address of April 16, 1953, in which he said that the policy of his Administration would not be tied to "any magic critical year which then had to be stretched out because of economic and production problems." Policy was to be based on the "sounder theory that a very real danger not only exists this year but may continue to

exist for years to come."[8]

This approach actually changed very little, but it helped sell the Administration's retrenchment policies. Based on the "long pull" plan, the new Joint Chiefs were asked to come up with a searching reappraisal of defense needs, a "new look." At first they had little success, for the fiscal year 1954 budget of President Truman was already considerably reduced from the previous ones, and could not be cut much further, nor could force levels. With the fiscal year 1955 budget, however, the new look began to take effect, and a pattern emerged which continued throughout the 1950s. Defense budgets became "directed verdicts,"[9] based not on military needs but on political estimates of what the economy could stand; and force levels were reduced to make them fit within the budget ceiling. As the pinch began to be felt, the pre-Korean pattern reasserted itself: strategic retaliation had to come first. Even in these years of economy the Air Force appropriation expanded every year.[10] Accelerating this tendency was the skyrocketing cost of the more sophisticated weapons systems, particularly long-range aircraft and missiles. The result was that the brunt of the cuts was borne by the Army,[11] and in spite of the determined

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[8] This address was later characterized by Admiral Radford, new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as containing "the motif and tempo" of the new strategy. For a more extended discussion, see Paul Peters' profusely documented work, Massive Retaliation: The Policy and Its Critics (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1959), pp. 1-3.

[9] A term used by General Ridgway, then Army Chief of Staff. See Ridgway, p. 289.

[10] See the consolidation of the 1950-1959 national security budgets in New York Times, January 14, 1958, p. 17.

[11] Seventy-six percent of the cut required by the fiscal year 1955 budget was to be made in Army funds. Ridgway, p. 277.

efforts of two successive Army Chiefs of Staff, Generals Ridgway and Taylor, the limited war capability so agonizingly built up during Korea was allowed to dissipate, not only in terms of reduced manpower, obsolescent equipment, and lack of mobility, but also in terms of strategy. In the military planning process, strategy actually counted for little. Real control resided in the Budget Bureau and the Comptroller's office in the Department of Defense.[12] Within the predetermined ceiling, the size of the slice of pie allotted each service depended on that organization's ability to attract it with "glamor" weapons, contributing to the overall "bigger bang for a buck" philosophy. This latter idea was a direct outgrowth of the keystone of the Eisenhower Administration's foreign policy--massive retaliation.

Massive Retaliation

Probably no policy of the United States since World War II has been more misunderstood, by both advocates and critics, than that of massive retaliation. For this reason, as well as because of its vital importance in shaping world affairs, a close examination of the theory and practice of massive retaliation, and its relationship to limited war, seems appropriate. The idea itself was born long before the Eisenhower Administration; in fact, its pedigree has been traced back to the "instant and condign punishment"

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[12] For a thorough discussion of this point, see William R. Kintner, in association with Joseph I. Coffey and Raymond J. Albright, Forging a New World: A Study of the Department of Defense (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), pp. 127-38; and Paul Y. Hammond, Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 343-46.

of the Baruch Plan of 1946.[13] The philosophy of massive retaliation was inherent in the air-atomic strategic theories of the pre-Korea years, but had not been formalized in that period as the means by which containment was to be effected.

In the election campaign, Mr. Dulles was quite vocal in his advocacy of massive retaliation. In a Paris address on May 5, 1952, he said that the best defense of Indochina and other parts of Asia would be the threat of retaliation against Communist China and the Soviet Union. "Is it not time," he asked, "that the Chinese Communists knew that if, for example, they sent their Red armies openly into Vietnam we will not be content merely to try to meet their armed forces at the point they select for their aggression but by retaliatory action of our own fashioning?" He then pointed out that "Siberia and much of China, notably Manchuria, are vulnerable . . ."[14] A few days later he stated that rather than local defense, we should retaliate against open aggression by using air and sea power to "hit an aggressor where it hurts" by "means of our choosing." He laid particular stress on the need for advance warning, saying: "The only effective way to stop prospective aggressors is to convince them in advance that if they commit aggression they will be subjected to retaliatory blows so costly that their aggression will not be a profitable operation."[15] These statements, taken at their face value, were directly antithetical to limited war. To accept them as such, however, would be an oversimplification.

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[13] Blackett, Atomic Weapons and East-West Relations, p. 77.

[14] New York Times, May 6, 1952, p. 3.

[15] New York Herald Tribune, May 16, 1952, p. 6.

Mr. Dulles did not view them in this light, but rather as a rejection of the particular limits imposed on military action in Korea by the Truman Administration. This distinction was never really made clear, however, and his pronouncements were accepted by the public as a direct alternative to the then unpopular idea of limited war.

General Eisenhower, however, was more cautious than his prospective Secretary of State in the campaign. He deleted the latter's reference to atomic retaliation from the party platform, and explicitly criticized the idea of exclusive reliance on retaliatory air power.[16]

After the election victory, one of General Eisenhower's first moves was to fulfill his campaign promise of making a personal trip to Korea, in order to bring "the Korean war to an early and honorable end."[17] During his return trip on board the cruiser USS Helena, key members of the new Administration shaped the outlines of a new national strategy, designed to balance economic strength with military strength.[18] It was here that the massive retaliation concept really took shape and was agreed upon as a keystone of foreign and military policy. A vital element was inserted into the formula when Admiral Radford stressed that United States power was dangerously overextended in exposed positions around the world where it could easily be pinned down. He argued

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[16] See C. L. Sulzberger's article in New York Times, July 9, 1952, p. 21. See also ibid., June 24, 1952, p. 21; and New York Herald Tribune, June 25, 1952, p. 12. Osgood analyzes the topic well in Limited War, pp. 193-205.

[17] New York Times, October 29, 1952, pp. 1, 8.

[18] See Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, chaps. xli and xlii, for an extended discussion of this "great equation."

for concentrating our striking power in a central reserve within or near North America and depending on allies to hold the front lines.[19] He envisaged the United States role as that of providing mainly air and sea power, strengthened by the use of atomic weapons. In this respect he differed markedly from General Taylor, who also advocated the concentration of power in a mobile strategic reserve, but who would put primary reliance on Army units of high mobility and great fire-power, conventional and atomic.

The idea of disengagement appealed strongly to Eisenhower, who saw in it the basis of a military posture that would permit significant defense budget reductions, as well as the answer to his campaign proposal that any war in the Far East be fought with "Asians against Asians" in the front lines.[20]

The broad strategy outline that emerged from early Eisenhower-ordered studies was a continuation of containment, bolstered with new strategic alliances at weak spots (e.g., Southeast Asia, Middle East), and backstopped by a strong military reliance on atomic weapons--ground force operations being shifted to allies.[21]

In a move symbolic of the rejection of the Truman Administration's limitation concept in Korea, one of Eisenhower's first acts as President was to "unleash Chiang."[22] The practical effect

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[19] See Charles J. V. Murphy, "The Eisenhower Shift," Fortune, (January, February, March, April, 1956) for a privileged observer's account of strategy formation by the new Eisenhower administration. For Admiral Radford's views on this particular point see the March issue, pp. 111-12. Another "semi-official" account is contained in Robert J. Donovan, Eisenhower: The Inside Story (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), pp. 17-19.

[20] New York Times, October 3, 1952, p. 16.

[21] Murphy, Fortune, March 1956, p. 232.

[22] See his State of the Union Message. New York Times, February 3, 1953, pp. 1, 14.

was nil, but because this had been President Truman's first Korean limit, its reversal as President Eisenhower's first act set the tone for what was to come in the limited war field.

After the broad strategy essentials were decided, there then began the military implementation of the new look, declared by General Taylor to have "established the direction which United States military policy has followed from 1953 to the present day [1959]."[23] It was characterized by reduced budgets, reduced manpower, and reduced emphasis on conventional weapons, (with the Army bearing the brunt of all these cuts); increased reliance on nuclear weapons and strategic bombing; and "disengagement," or withdrawal from overseas troop commitments. Its key theme was the "substitution of machines for men," made possible by the arrival of the age of nuclear plenty. This was expressed by the new Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, in March, 1954:

> . . . the integration of new weapons systems into military planning creates new relationships between men and material which emphasize airpower and permit overall economies in the use of manpower . . . .
>
> The fiscal year 1955 budget incorporates the new force objectives and continues a rapid buildup of air strength, and the creation, maintenance, and full exploitation of modern airpower . . . .
>
> As we increase the striking power of our combat forces by the application of technological advances and new weapons and by the continuing growth of airpower, the total number of military personnel can be reduced.[24]

The new look was the inevitable outcome of the conflicting dual

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[23] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, p. 18.

[24] U. S., Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, Hearings, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1955, 83d Cong., 2d Sess., 1954, pp. 3, 7, 8. Quoted in Gavin, p. 150.

mandate of the Republicans. An attempt to get maximum security for less money must of necessity concentrate on the greatest threat, and, as in the pre-Korean period, the ability to fight limited war was sacrificed in an effort to ensure the deterrence of a major Russian attack.

Meanwhile Secretary Dulles was publicizing the new policy with statements indicating that a breach of armistice in Korea or an attack on Indochina would result in hostilities not confined to those countries.[25] These statements were only preliminaries, however. The major exposition of the doctrine of massive retaliation was made by Dulles in his address before the Council on Foreign Relations on January 12, 1954.[26] In this now-famous speech the Secretary of State attacked the inflexibility of our former policy and outlined the rationale of the Eisenhower-Dulles alternative:

> Local defense will always be important. But there is no local defense which alone will contain the mighty land power of the Communist world. Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power . . . .
>
> The way to deter aggression is for the free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing.
>
> So long as our basic policy concepts were unclear, our military leaders could not be selective in building our military power. If an enemy could pick his time and place and method of warfare--and if our policy was to remain the traditional one of meeting aggression by direct and local opposition--then we had to be ready to fight in the Arctic and in the Tropics; in Asia, the Near East, and in

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[25] See Council on Foreign Relations, Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1953, ed. Peter V. Curl (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), pp. 432-35; and John Foster Dulles, "Korean Problems," State Department Bulletin, September 14, 1953, p. 340.

[26] Later published as: John Foster Dulles, "The Evolution of Foreign Policy," Ibid., January 25, 1954, pp. 107-10.

> Europe; by sea, by land, and by air; with old weapons and with new weapons . . . . This could not be continued for long without grave budgetary, economic, and social consequences.
>
> But before military planning could be changed, the President and his advisers, as represented by the National Security Council, had to make some basic policy decisions. This has been done. The basic decision was to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing. Now the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff can shape our military establishment to fit what is our policy, instead of having to try to be ready to meet the enemy's many choices. That permits of a selection of military means instead of a multiplication of means. As a result, it is now possible to get, and share, more basic security at less cost.

This address set off a storm of protest, to the effect that it was an empty bluff, that it would cause every minor skirmish to escalate to all-out war, that it would leave us no choice but inaction or overaction, and a host of others. This criticism, in turn, brought about, in the words of Bernard Brodie, "a really fabulous spate of corrections, clarifications, counterassertions, and restatements, with the result that confusion was become worse confounded and the original declaration almost nullified."[27] Careful study seems to indicate, however, that it was not the Secretary of State, but his critics, who caused most of the confusion. Certainly Secretary Dulles was guilty of an over-generalization in his original pronouncement of massive retaliation, but the prime fault seems to lie with obtuse, obstinate, or politically inspired critics, who developed an imaginary doctrine from selected statements and refused to give credence to any explanations. Adlai Stevenson, for example, charged on March 8, 1954, that: "All this means--if it means anything--is that if the

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[27] Brodie, The Reporter, November 18, 1954, p. 20.

Communists try another Korea we will retaliate by dropping atom bombs on Moscow . . . or else we will concede the loss of another Korea."[28] Mr. Stevenson was wrong and probably knew it. Secretary Dulles had claimed that massive retaliation was a flexible policy, and as such it had several meanings. None of these meanings was what Stevenson charged. It was, in essence, a repudiation of the limiting process used by the Truman Administration in Korea--a promise that we, not the enemy, would determine the place, and the strength, of our counterattacks. It did not mean that we would drop "atom bombs on Moscow," nor that we would fight to annihilate the enemy, but that our promised reaction would deter aggression by making it too costly to the enemy. The only guarantee to "hit them [the communists] with everything we have" was reserved for a direct attack on the United States or its vital interests.[29] Secretary Dulles repeatedly emphasized the word "capacity" for massive retaliation that had appeared in his original pronouncement, and pointed out that "the possession of that capacity does not impose the necessity of using it in every instance of attack. It is not our intention to turn every local war into a general war."[30] He also stressed the selective nature of the policy, declaring:

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[28] New York Times, March 7, 1954, p. 62.

[29] U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, Foreign Policy and Its Relation to Military Programs, Statements of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Adm. Arthur Radford, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 83d Cong., 2d Sess., 1954, p. 30. Secretary Dulles' testimony at these hearings is among the most illuminating of his clarifications of the massive retaliation doctrine.

[30] Ibid., p. 4.

> Now that does not mean that in the case of any aggression it is necessary or desirable to bomb Moscow or Peking or whatever it may be. There are almost always areas in which we can operate with primary dependence upon the mobility of sea and air power in such a way that we can always hold a penalty for aggression which is a little bit bigger than the value to an aggressor or what he could gain, . . . and if a potential aggressor knows that we have that policy, that that will operate as an effective deterrent.[31]

He later further clarified the selectivity feature by denying that it would necessarily "involve massive destruction of great population centers like Shanghai, Peking, or Canton."[32] His explanations, however, were undoubtedly hampered by his belief that the policy would be more effective if potential aggressors remained ignorant of the details.[33] In answer to "onesidedness" criticism by Mr. Stevenson, Admiral Radford stated:

> Our planning does not subscribe to the thinking that the ability to deliver massive atomic retaliation is, by itself, adequate to meet all our security needs. It is not correct to say we are relying on one weapon, or one service, or that we are anticipating one kind of war.[34]

The confusion and misunderstanding that swirled and eddied about the massive retaliation policy during the Eisenhower years were

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[31] Ibid., p. 6.

[32] James Shepley, "How Dulles Averted War," Life, January 16, 1956, p. 78.

[33] This point is made, among other places, in Secretary Dulles' excellent article "A Policy for Security and Peace," Foreign Affairs, XXXII, No. 3 (April, 1954), p. 364. Here, also, he stated "it is important to have the flexibility and the facilities which make various responses available." He emphasized the need to have "means for responding effectively on a selective basis," and for the United States not to "put itself in the position where the only response open to it is general war." (p. 358).

[34] New York Times, March 10, 1954, p. 12.

also caused, in part, by overzealous advocates of the policy, who carried it, in their statements, far beyond the concept of its originator. These spokesmen did not seem to realize, as Secretary Dulles clearly did, that massive retaliation in the all-out connotation was senseless in the era of nuclear parity.[35] Vice President Richard M. Nixon ventured into this area with his speech of March 13, 1954, in which he stated: "Rather than let the Communists nibble us to death all over the world in little wars we would rely in the future primarily on our massive mobile retaliatory power which we could use in our discretion against the major source of aggression at times and places that we chose."[36] The policy likewise undoubtedly suffered from its close association, in many minds, with the Finletter doctrine of all-out air-atomic strategy--a hydrogen age extension of his earlier study[37]--which was contained in his book Power and Policy, published at the height of the controversy.

Several points should be made concerning the strategy of massive retaliation before proceeding to an examination of its applications. First, it was a civilian strategy, in the sense that it was derived from civilian (fiscal) considerations and was shaped primarily by civilian administrators. Military advice was sought, but primarily from those who would agree, as is testified to by

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[35] The Soviets had exploded their first thermonuclear weapon some five months before Secretary Dulles' massive retaliation speech.

[36] New York Times, March 14, 1954, p. 44. (Italics mine.)

[37] Supra, chap. ii (note 80).

the complete replacement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and their appointment for indefinite terms.[38]

A second point is that massive retaliation was not an alternative to containment, but was designed as a new means of effecting it, although it was not so announced. The brief flirtation of the Eisenhower administration with "liberation" ended before massive retaliation reached maturity.

Third, and most significant, the new strategy was not a complete rejection of limited war, but a change in the limiting concept. It was, of course, primarily a deterrent that was aimed at; but if deterrence failed, the application of massive retaliation would, in all probability, expand (not obliterate) the geographic and weapons limits set by the aggressor in his attack. It would probably not of itself, however, expand the objectives of the conflict. It is with regard to this point that the great controversy over massive retaliation has arisen, assisted by the unfortunate choice of the term itself. A clearer understanding of the developments of President Eisenhower's eight years can be gained if massive retaliation is regarded in two connotations--one, the extreme all-or-nothing version that the critics invented as a target; and the other, the less-extreme official version, which could better be termed "limited retaliation." It was in actuality a limited war strategy, to be executed with little or no dependence on ground forces, and to put almost no emphasis on weapons limits and relatively little on geographic limits. The ultimate failure

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[38] See Gilpin, Arms and the State, pp. 347-48, and Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 18-21, for comments on this.

of this policy was largely the fault of its design. It was patterned to stop direct aggressions of the Korean type, and contained too much inherent risk to be readily employed against the more ambiguous challenges to which the Communists had shifted. Even so, it would not have been such an unpropitious strategy were it not for still another aspect of massive retaliation--the budget.

The prime mover behind massive retaliation, the factor responsible for its birth, was the economy commitment of the Administration; and as the strategy was implemented, it was this element, in the form of strict budget limitations, that cast our defense posture into a rigid mold and severely reduced the flexibility of our military strategy. Had it not been for this fiscally enforced one-sidedness, massive retaliation of itself would not have been so extreme, but would have resembled the policy which General MacArthur had endorsed. Throughout the eight years of the new look, whenever the inevitable clashes arose between the divergent aims of economy and security, decisions were made for economy.

The final point was to do with the concept of "flexibility," the misunderstandings over which have reached towering proportions. The Administration constantly spoke of its strategy as being a flexible one, in the sense that it would not condemn us to answering the enemy on his terms but would permit us to choose the time, place, and means of warfare. The critics, however, termed massive retaliation (or the straw man they said was massive retaliation) rigid and inflexible, dooming us to annihilation or inaction. In their thinking, flexibility was characterized by having instantly

available, highly mobile, completely modernized ground troops in large numbers, equipped for either conventional or nuclear war, with extensive sea-lift and air-lift capability and sufficient naval and tactical air support.[39] Only thus, they believed, could we choose the most advantageous response from the complete spectrum available. In order to understand these differences, it should be realized that, in simplest terms, the critics' "flexibility" is merely a more expensive brand of the Administration's "flexibility." The former would encompass all the latter, and add the capability for local ground force action. In summary, then, the key element of massive retaliation was its rejection of the possibility of ground force action. In the words of General Taylor:

> Army forces would be kept small lest we be tempted to use them to fight another Korea by conventional means. The partisans of the New Look were convinced that the U. S. should never again make that mistake and set about reducing Army forces to make it physically impossible even if our future leaders might be so inclined.[40]

It was this one factor which doomed massive retaliation to impotence in the face of cleverly conceived communist aggression.

Indochina

Hardly was the ink dry on the Administration's new military strategy of massive retaliation when it was tested in Indochina. During France's postwar struggles to maintain the colonial status quo in Indochina, American economic aid, technical assistance, and military equipment were granted to the French and Vietnamese in

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[39] See, e.g., General Taylor's proposed "Strategy of Flexible Response." The Uncertain Trumpet, passim.

[40] Ibid., p. 18.

ever-increasing quantities. After the armistice in Korea,[41] economic and technical assistance to Indochina, designed to accomplish long-term containment by raising the standards of living and developing viable economies, had to be subordinated more and more to military aid for immediate requirements against the Vietminh insurgents.[42]

As the communist successes mounted in 1953 and 1954, spurred by the inability of France's unenlightened political policy to attract strong local support, and by the armistice in Korea which freed Chinese men and equipment for use in Indochina, the administration, mindful of the consequences of having failed to give clear notice of America's intentions to resist aggression in Korea, embarked on a series of clear and unmistakable warnings to Communist China.[43] In the spring of 1954 the crisis rapidly came to a head. The Berlin Conference in February set up a formal international discussion at Geneva in April, to attempt to settle the issue. In March the Vietminh, with extensive Chinese equipment, training,

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[41] Characterized by General MacArthur as "the death warrant for Indochina." Whitney, p. 509.

[42] Rostow, in The United States in the World Arena, p. 263, estimates that by early 1953 the United States was carrying between one-third and one-half the financial burden of the war. Osgood lists our fiscal year 1954 aid at $785 million. Limited War, p. 215.

[43] A few of the more significant were the joint U.S.-French communiqué of March 28, 1953; President Eisenhower's address of August 4, 1953, in which he stated that the loss of Indochina "would be of a most terrible significance to the United States;" and Secretary Dulles' address of September 2, 1953, declaring: "The Chinese Communist regime should realize that such a second aggression [Korea was the first] could not occur without grave consequences which might not be confined to Indochina." See New York Times for the following date in each case.

and advice, mounted a heavy assault which culminated in the fall of Dienbienphu and the collapse of the French and Vietnamese forces in May. The new French government of Mendès-France agreed to the partition of Vietnam in July, and the Indochinese war had ended in a signal defeat for the West. In spite of our warnings and threats, United States policy seemed to be one of total inaction while a vital portion of Southeast Asia fell to the communists. The new United States policy was ignominiously exposed to the world as an empty bluff. The shock effect of this military humiliation had a marked, though delayed, effect on United States limited war strategy, and should be analyzed in detail along with its causes.[44]

The non-intervention decision

The Administration's dilemma with regard to Indochina was agonizing. On the one hand, the area was regarded as vital to United States security interests. On the other, the policy of not committing American ground forces to the Asian mainland lay at the bedrock level of President Eisenhower's military strategy. As the French position deteriorated it became evident that active United States military intervention would be required to prevent disaster, yet no action was forthcoming from Washington. The President declared, three days before the communist assault on Dienbienphu, that he would not involve America in war unless Congress declared it.[45] The likelihood of this was known to be slim, for even

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[44] Osgood, Limited War, pp. 205-26, has been used as a general background source for the strategic implications of Indochina.

[45] Statement at a press conference, March 10, 1954. See New York Times, March 11, 1954, p. 1.

Senate Majority Leader Knowland, an outspoken advocate of the "tough" policy, had given "categorical assurances" that no United States ground forces would be sent.[46] As the decision-making processes reached their culmination at the highest level, it was the ground troops factor that swung the scales in favor of inaction, and revealed the glaring weakness of massive retaliation.

Three times in March and April the French desperately appealed for air strikes to save Dienbienphu. Two American aircraft carriers were close by in the South China Sea, with tactical air groups armed with atomic weapons poised for action, yet they were never used.[47] Why--when this proposed move meshed so closely with the new strategy--was it not taken? One of the contributing reasons was undoubtedly the fact that the Chinese intervention was not direct, as in Korea. Their assistance was so all-encompassing, however, that this cannot be given total weight. A second, and more persuasive, reason was the lack of British support. Secretary Dulles attributed a considerable measure of the blame for Allied failure in Indochina to British disapproval of any plan for united action. The central consideration behind the decision, however, seems to be its military weakness. While the atomic air strikes were urged by Secretary Dulles and Admiral Radford, the National Security Council, and the Congressional leaders who were consulted, disagreed. Their objections were based on lack of support by the other Joint Chiefs, on Secretary Dulles' failure to consult allies, and on the doubt that air strikes would be successful without

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[46] Quoted by James Reston, Ibid., February 12, 1954, p. 2.

[47] Chalmers M. Roberts, "The Day We Didn't Go to War," The Reporter, September 14, 1954, pp. 31-35.

eventual ground troop commitment.[48] General Ridgway presented the most effective opposition to intervention. He saw, in the air strike proposal,

> . . . that same old delusive idea . . . that we could do things the cheap and easy way, by going into Indo-China with air and naval forces alone . . . . I felt sure that if we committed air and naval power to that area, we would have to follow them up immediately with ground forces in support.
>
> . . . .
>
> In Korea, we had learned that air and naval power alone cannot win a war and that inadequate ground forces cannot win one either. It was incredible to me that we had forgotten that bitter lesson so soon--that we were on the verge of making that same tragic error.[49]

To underscore his point, General Ridgway had a team of experts survey the terrain and logistic facilities in Indochina, and he forwarded their report, showing the immense difficulty of military operations there, and the gigantic scope to which they would expand, to the President. It is the General's belief that this analysis "played a considerable, perhaps a decisive, part in persuading our government not to embark on that tragic adventure."[50]

Shortly after the meeting with Congressional leaders, on April 4, 1954, President Eisenhower established four conditions, aside from Congressional authorization, that would have to be met before the United States would intervene militarily. First, Britain (and Australia and New Zealand) must participate. Second,

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Ridgway, pp. 276-77.

[50] Ibid. Marquis Childs's excellent account of the Indochina crisis lists this study as the chief factor in the decision not to intervene. See The Eisenhower Age: The Diary of a Crisis (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1955), pp. 154, 159.

France must invite us to assist her. Third, France must agree to see it through. Fourth, France must remove the stigma of colonialism by guaranteeing complete independence for Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.[51] As these conditions would clearly not be met, our inaction was assured.

Strategy implications of non-intervention

Indochina presents a valuable case history in limited war inability, and clearly it is strategy, in the broadest connotation of the term, that is the most critical missing element. If we had intervened in the manner dictated by conventional thinking, which regards limited wars as just like wars fought on a small scale, forces would probably have looked like a training exercise by comparison. The Chinese would very likely have intervened in force, in conditions ideal for their preferred form of warfare and nearly impossible for ours, and, not being able to attain our limited objectives by limited force, and not being willing to suffer a limited military defeat with major global prestige overtones, we would probably have expanded our effort until eventually huge forces would have been committed. Military victory, in this manner, would have been highly expensive.

What Indochina demonstrated so explicitly was the need for an entirely new limited war strategy for containment of indirect aggression in the grey areas. This strategy would have to recognize that the ability and will of the inhabitants to defend themselves was a sine qua non of success, and that the identification of communism with the desire for independence from colonialism had to

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[51] Donovan, p. 265.

be fought, and fought successfully, at every social and economic level. Thus it began to look as though an effective limited war strategy for the rimlands of Eurasia must include an extensive non-military effort which must be implemented long before the guns start shooting. In the military field, a revival of the neglected art of guerrilla warfare was seen as necessary, not to the exclusion of more conventional methods, but as an alternative to the non-economical practice of sending a battalion or regiment of infantry into the jungle in pursuit of a band of raiders.

Once again communist aggression had probed into a gap in our strategy, and it was the more disconcerting this time because the new look had ostensibly been shaped to avoid just this.[52] Had the Chinese moved into Indochina in direct military action, as in Korea, massive retaliation might have been brought into play in air attacks on Chinese military and industrial centers and communications networks. In the absence of this direct action, however, retaliatory strikes against China seemed too provocative, too likely to precipitate general war.

The critics of massive retaliation never cease to blame the loss in Indochina on the emptiness of this strategy. In the main, this is unjust criticism. There are many things wrong with the strategy, and it has undoubtedly caused failures, but after a

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[52] Often overlooked in Secretary Dulles' original address on massive retaliation, however, is a passage which indicates that the architect of this policy might have foreseen the possibility of just this type of fiasco. Disclaiming any "magic formula that insures against all forms of Communist success," he warned: "It is normal that at some times and at some places there may be setbacks to the cause of freedom. What we do expect to ensure is that any setbacks will have only temporary and local significance . . . ."

careful examination of the facts one concludes that it was not responsible for the loss of Indochina. The new look had not yet weakened the army to the point where it could not have intervened, and held, while we mobilized for victory; but the national effort required would have been tremendous, probably more than the public would have been willing to pay.[53] To have won in Indochina would have required limited war planning, and action, dating back to 1945 and earlier, long before the Eisenhower administration started shaping our policy. By 1954 it seems unlikely that any limited effort the west could mount would have prevailed.

Results of failure in Indochina

But regardless of justification, the policy of massive retaliation and the military concept of the new look became twin whipping boys for everyone unhappy with the results. Herbert Luethy, the Swiss political commentator and historian, captures the mood well.

> Never was the difference between the verbal intransigence and the practical prudence of the new Republican team in Washington more disastrously demonstrated than during these feverish weeks, when threats in Washington of a preventive war against China alternated with assurances to the electorate that the United States would in no circumstances engage in "another Korean war." Never did the so-called strategy of "massive reprisals," that lame compromise between the crusading spirit and the spirit of budgetary economy, more strikingly demonstrate its incapacity to respond to the limited reversals, the local conflicts and the pin-pricks which constitute the daily fare of international politics. Reduced to the sole device of threatening apocalyptic war on every occasion, it sowed terror among America's allies and proteges without making much impression on her enemies, and finally ended in resounding inaction.[54]

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[53] Ridgway, p. 277.

[54] Herbert Luethy, France against Herself, trans. Eric Mosbacher (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1955), p. 459.

While this is overly severe, there is no doubt that by giving a virtual ultimatum to the Chinese, then not being prepared to carry out our threats, we suffered a serious loss of prestige, and more importantly, a great reduction of the credibility of our deterrent. This latter factor can be fully appreciated only when one realizes the extent to which Secretary Dulles' strategy relied on threat, not action. The large gap between our "declaratory policy" and our "action policy" had been flagrantly revealed to the world at large.[55] By exposing our military weakness, at the same time as it raised fears of an irresponsible use of atomic weapons, the loss of Indochina increased the trend of formerly pro-West countries toward the "neutralism" that Russia had been encouraging with her "soft" post-Korea policy.[56] This tendency was further accelerated by the rise of the "peaceful coexistence" philosophy in Moscow after Stalin's death, by the effects of the Bandung Conference in the spring of 1955 on the Asian countries, and by the Kremlin's major policy shift, to a denial of the inevitability of war, at the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow in 1956.

To those not emotionally committed to "pure" massive retaliation, Indochina pointed out clearly the disastrous results of following the "tough" line in foreign policy while remaining committed to military retrenchment. Although a last-minute local defense augmentation on a limited scale by the United States would

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[55] Professor Blackett, in Atomic Weapons and East-West Relations, p. 30, develops this idea from the analysis contained in Paul H. Nitze, "Atoms, Strategy and Policy," Foreign Affairs, XXXIV, No. 2 (January, 1956), 187-98.

[56] This trend is discussed by Osgood in Limited War, pp. 225-26.

almost certainly not have saved the day, nevertheless the loss of this vital area taught an important lesson by implication. It emphasized the need for strong ground forces, and exposed, painfully for many, the truth that unless we have the will and capacity to support local defense by limited war, to put our Army into action on the spot, an advertised air-atomic capability will not contain communism.

Limited War Strategy in the Mid-1950's

In the years between the partition of Indochina in 1954 and the Russian launching of Sputnik in 1957, the limited war strategy of the United States did not follow any clear pattern. Several seemingly dissociated trends can be glimpsed, but even these are not always consistent. The overall shift is clearly in the direction of an increased limited war capability, and toward the development of a limited war strategy, but it is neither a rapid nor a steady movement, and it does not progress far from the massive retaliation end of the spectrum.

Selective retaliation

In the aftermath of Indochina, there became noticeable an apparent "softening" of the administration's pronouncements on massive retaliation. The "selective" and "flexible" features of this policy, which had always been there,[57] were now, for the first time, stressed. In the words of two perceptive observers:

> . . . Indochina had revealed the shortcomings of a defense posture which relied overwhelmingly on nuclear weapons. Dulles was too intelligent to miss

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[57] See, e.g., Dulles, Foreign Affairs, XXXII, No. 3, 353-64.

> the point. It was to cause him to revise his concept of massive retaliation and to propose that the United States should put greater emphasis upon a capacity for "selective" retaliation. This meant having limited-war means to fit retaliation to the crime.[58]

Action to implement this change, in terms of military manpower, hardware, and strategy, was not seen for several years, but the declaratory policy of the United States gradually started shifting to one of graduated deterrence (although it was not so labeled) immediately after Indochina.[59]

The trend can clearly be seen in an address by Secretary Dulles on December 8, 1955, in which he stated:

> We have developed, with our allies, a collective system of great power which can be flexibly used on whatever scale may be requisite to make aggression costly. Our capacity to retaliate must be, and is, massive in order to deter all forms of aggression. But if we have to use that capacity, such use would be selective and adapted to the occasion.[60]

Contributing to this gravitation away from massive retaliation was the continuing development of tactical nuclear weapons, discussed at length below, which had a powerful effect in shaping military strategy and tactics.

The Administration's alternative to the weakening massive retaliation was clearly not to be a return to local defense, however. Ground force expenditures and manning levels continued to drop as

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[58] Roscoe Drummond and Gaston Coblentz, Duel at the Brink: John Foster Dulles' Command of American Power (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 23-24.

[59] See Blackett, Atomic Weapons and East-West Relations, chap. i, for a lucid discussion of this point.

[60] Later published as: John Foster Dulles, "The New Phase of the Struggle with International Communism," State Department Bulletin, December 19, 1955, p. 1004.

disengagement was more fully implemented, in spite of strong protests by the new Army Chief of Staff, General Taylor. By 1956 all but two American divisions had been withdrawn from Korea. Testifying on the embryonic SEATO organization, Secretary Dulles stated we were not dedicating any major ground force units to Southeast Asia.

> We rely primarily upon the deterrent of our mobile striking power . . . . I believe that if there should be an open armed attack in that area the most effective step would be to strike at the source of aggression rather than try to push American manpower into the area to try to fight a ground war.[61]

The blow that these developments struck at the advocates of "classical" limited war was aggravated when the Secretary of State outlined his "Three Front" doctrine in February and March, 1955.[62] According to this strategy, the Korean, Formosan, and Southeast Asian fronts were to be considered interdependent, with an attack in any one area by the Communist Chinese being the Western signal for response in all three. It was believed that the prospect of a three-front war would deter any Chinese aggression. This idea had evolved from the original strategy discussions on the USS Helena in 1952,[63] and its revival now illustrates well the shift of the Administration's strategic concept to some intermediate point between massive retaliation and local limited war.

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[61] U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, 83d Cong., 2d Sess., 1954, p. 17.

[62] See, e.g., New York Times, February 24, 1955, pp. 1, 3; March 9, 1955, p. 4; and March 16, 1955, p. 9.

[63] Donovan, pp. 115-16.

Public pressure for a limited war capability

The lessons of Korea and Indochina were not lost on a considerable segment of the attentive public, however, and as the months went by with no significant action taken by the Administration to fill the limited war gap, a chorus of voices, many of which were highly vocal and articulate, rose in protest. In the forefront was George F. Kennan, who claimed "the day of total wars has passed . . . from now on limited military operations are the only ones that could conceivably serve any coherent purpose."[64] Close in his wake came an ever-increasing number of books and articles by such writers as Brodie and Liddell Hart, attacking the Administration's strategic concept. Likewise, political figures of the Democratic party joined the fray. Examples are Senator Jackson's statement that "the position of Mr. John Foster Dulles . . . is essentially a prepare-for-one-type-of-war policy;"[65] and ex-Secretary Acheson's charge that: "We do not have, nor does the administration intend to have, the ground forces . . . adequate to deal with limited operations, should they become necessary."[66]

Pressure toward the limited war concept also arose from the general public realization that the "balance of terror"[67]

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[64] George F. Kennan, Realities of American Foreign Policy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 60.

[65] U. S., Congressional Record, 83d Cong., 2d Sess., 1954, C, Part 2, 1782.

[66] New York Times, September 27, 1956, p. 24. For a more complete discussion of Acheson's strategy ideas, see his Power and Diplomacy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[67] A term coined by Winston Churchill in his famous House of Commons address of March 1, 1955.

reached since the development of thermonuclear weapons had rendered all-out war too terrible to contemplate. A profound psychological reaction set in, based on the vague awareness that this new force was not "just another weapon" but an instrument of mass suicide for the human race. It is a curious fact that the atomic horror wrought at Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulted in no such reaction. Perhaps fission-type weapons were limited enough in power to make them seem to belong to the same continuum as conventional weapons, although at the extreme end. Perhaps the older delivery systems still left the hope of oceanic protection intact. In any case, as Brodie has stated: "serious thinking about limited war had to await the coming of the thermonuclear bomb . . . . no one . . . seriously advocated exploration of limited war techniques prior to the coming of the H-bomb."[68] Now, coupled with the public freshets of limited war thinking, was a deepseated revulsion against the current fusion-bomb strategy. However, although President Eisenhower himself, and spokesmen for his Administration, repeatedly proclaimed that thermonuclear war was no longer a possible policy for rational men, they maintained that the surest way to avoid war was to stand firm in our resolve to defend our values and interests, if need be by life itself, and that the best framework for this was massive retaliation.

The Army's battle for limited war

But the element of informed public opinion was not fighting alone. Throughout his two years as Army Chief of Staff, General Ridgway had constantly recommended the creation of a truly effective

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[68] Bernard Brodie, "More about Limited War," World Politics, X, No. 1 (October, 1957), 113.

limited war capability--"combat-ready forces that could . . . put out big fires or little ones wherever the Communists might set them."[69] He urged the development of both atomic and conventional capabilities, and pointed out that contrary to what Secretary Wilson was maintaining, field armies in the atomic age would require more men than previously. His efforts did not prevail, however, and he felt that in his two years as Chief of Staff he "was being called upon to tear down, rather than to build up, the ultimately decisive element in a properly proportioned fighting force on which the world could rest its hopes for maintaining the peace, or, if the catastrophe of war came, for enforcing its will upon those who broke that peace." Repeatedly he "was called upon to take actions and advocate policies, which, if continued, might eventually so weaken the United States Army that it could no longer . . . fulfill its role as an effective instrument of national policy alongside of its sister services."[70]

In his last days as Chief of Staff, General Ridgway submitted a report to Secretary Wilson containing his views on national security.[71] He stated therein, in the strongest terms, that the United States must "be prepared to meet and defeat limited aggression in small perimeter wars, whether or not nuclear weapons are used." This capability, in his opinion, should take priority over the capability to defeat the Soviet Bloc in general war. He further flatly stated that our present forces were inadequate, and went on

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[69] Ridgway, p. 293.

[70] Ibid., pp. 293-94.

[71] The report is reproduced as Appendix 1 of his book. See Ibid., pp. 323-32.

to develop what was needed to produce a "viable military strategy for cold war situations." In its entirety, this paper was one of the most comprehensive, lucid, national strategy blueprints, accounting adequately for limited war, yet produced.

The paper was filed without action, however, and General Ridgway's differences with the Administration were partially responsible for his replacement by General Taylor in mid-1955. Although his four years were filled with many of the same frustrations his predecessor experienced, General Taylor did witness a slow but significant change in national and military strategy. The bitterly fought Washington battles are well described, though from a biased viewpoint, in his book The Uncertain Trumpet.

Shortly before General Taylor became Chief of Staff, the National Security Council had completed its 1955 review of the new look, and the resulting "Basic National Security Policy" paper represented such a departure, in his opinion, from the dogma of massive retaliation that he developed "A National Military Program" to implement the policy as he saw it.[72] He terms this "the first coherent statement of the new strategy of Flexible Response which was taking form to oppose the orthodox strategy of Massive Retaliation," and it formed the core of the position he argued for and defended during his entire tour.[73] At the heart of this proposed strategy was the same priority scale that General Ridgway had urged:

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[72] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 29-30. General Taylor's program is also reproduced here, pp. 30-34.

[73] Ibid., p. 30.

> If we act in consistence with the principle of deterrence, we should make ample provisions for those forces contributing to the deterrence of general war, the deterrence of local aggression, and the defeat of local aggression before seeking to satisfy the full requirement for survival or victory in general war.[74]

This was the key element of the entire controversy, which, as do all defense controversies, in the last analysis came down to the allocation of appropriations. Should available funds, which were never enough, be used to provide a greater and greater general war capability, or should the massive retaliation effort be stopped at a given level and the remainder channeled into limited war forces and equipment? The answer has not yet been found, and the same struggle persists today between the "counterforce" and the "finite deterrence" schools.

In General Ridgway's battles, and in General Taylor's early ones, the Army normally found itself in a minority of one at the Joint Chiefs' meetings, arguing against the united front of the other services. By 1957, however, the Navy and the Marine Corps had come around to support the Army position.[75]

During his four-year tour, General Taylor took several actions within the Army aimed at shaping it to handle the problems of the atomic age, including those of limited war, more efficiently. One of the most significant was the formation of STRAC, the Strategic Army Corps, conceived as a hard-hitting, highly mobile, fire brigade. It was, however, hamstrung by the inadequacy of airlift provided by the Air Force. A second development of note

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[74] Ibid., p. 35. (Italics mine.)

[75] Ibid., pp. 58, 100-102.

was the reorganization of the basic Army structure from the old "triangular" divisions of some 17,500 men to new "pentomic" divisions of about 13,800 men, with most of the former divisional logistic responsibilities moved to the rear echelons and the five smaller combat units within the new division armed and deployed for either atomic or conventional warfare.[76]

The Administration's resistance to limited war

If, in retrospect, it appears that the Administration's national security policy gradually shifted in the mid-1950's from massive retaliation to a greater awareness of the need for limited war capabilities, the trend was scarcely apparent at the time, and official resistance to any attack on massive retaliation was strong. The President himself set the tone for this, as illustrated by the following two statements. In January, 1955, he declared that "when you resorted to force as the arbiter of human difficulty you didn't know where you were going." In general, he said, "if you got deeper and deeper, there was just no limit except what was imposed by the limitations of force itself."[77] In his budget message of two years later, President Eisenhower stated that the first mission assigned our forces "is to maintain ready nuclear-air-retaliatory forces so strong that they will deter a potential

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[76]For a concise summary of the pentomic organization, see General Taylor's testimony in: U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, Military Posture Briefing, 85th Cong., 1st Sess., 1957, p. 144, et passim. See also "This is a Look at the New Atomic Army," United States News and World Report, January 25, 1957, pp. 50-53. This periodical cited hereafter as U. S. News.

[77]New York Times, January 13, 1955, p. 14.

aggressor from initiating an attack."[78] The main burden of the defense of massive retaliation, however, was borne by spokesmen for the Defense Department, an effort well documented in General Taylor's book. Under the leadership of Secretary Wilson and Admiral Radford, every attempt was made "to set the national strategy even more deeply in the concrete pattern of Massive Retaliation."[79]

Many of the efforts involved the definition of types of war and a categorization of the weapons with which they would be fought. Admiral Radford "was determined to eliminate from military planning any consideration of the possibility of a conventional war with the Soviet Union," and to a large degree he succeeded. He also forced through a decision authorizing the armed forces to count on the use of atomic weapons even in "situations short of general war, when required by military considerations. In effect, these actions ruled out consideration of a conventional conflict of any sort with the U.S.S.R. and weakened the case for conventionally armed forces in limited wars."[80] The reason for this lack of flexibility in planning, which might well have proved disastrous if tested, was the budgetary and fiscal consideration which lay at the foundation of all defense policy.

But the massive retaliation advocates did not stop at the level of definitions and weapons-employment decisions. In July, 1956, Admiral Radford

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[78] Ibid., January 17, 1957, p. 16.

[79] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, p. 49.

[80] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

> . . . led a major effort to cut conventional forces and particularly the Army. He introduced into the JCS the most drastic proposal of the New Look period, which if adopted, would have caused a complete revision of our force structure in the next four years. Although it failed of adoption, the Radford proposal is of historic significance as an indication of the extent to which the extreme partisans of Massive Retaliation were prepared to go . . . .
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> Under the Radford proposal . . . the Army deployments . . . were to be reduced to small atomic task forces. Resistance to hostile ground attack would be left to token U. S. forces, supplemented by the indigenous forces of our allies. The Army . . . was to be greatly reduced and limited primarily to civil defense missions . . . .
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> The proposal was based upon the unqualified acceptance of the short-war theory.[81]

After General Taylor had lost his battle in opposition to this plan, a leak to the press caused such an uproar, at home and abroad, that it was dropped. It reappeared a year later in slightly less drastic form, however, in the Wilson-Radford program for 1957-1961 which was based on the Presidentially approved policy to "maximize air power and minimize the foot soldier," and was partially adopted, bringing planned Army strength down to 850,000 by 1959.[82]

The overall tenor of the Defense Department policy in the Wilson-Radford years, with its emphasis on fiscal considerations and its massive retaliation dogma, is well summed up in a statement attributed to Secretary Wilson by General Gavin: "He can't afford to fight limited wars. He can only afford to fight a big war, and if there is one that is the kind it will be."[83]

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[81] Ibid., pp. 39-40. See also New York Times, July 13, 14, 15, and 17, 1956, all p. 1, for the sensational "Leviero leak" and the follow-up stories on the proposal.

[82] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 40-42.

[83] Gavin, p. 124.

The 1955 military policy review by the National Security Council, which showed an awareness of limited war problems, was overriden by those of 1956 and 1957, which followed the massive retaliation line closely.[84]

Every effort was made, not only in the Defense Department but in the State Department and throughout Washington to keep the bitter struggle among the Joint Chiefs of Staff from being publicly known. It seems to have been a clearly defined policy of the Eisenhower Administration to hide such disagreements on the theory that if the public were aware of the top-level dissention, and of the true facts of the shifting international power balance, the pressure for a higher level of defense expenditures would be severe.[85] Typical of the Administration's policy was the refusal of publication clearance for an article by General Taylor. Written for Foreign Affairs magazine, the article, entitled "Security through Deterrence," cast doubts upon the credibility of massive retaliation and urged a more flexible military strategy. The comments by State and Defense on the returned article are most illuminating of the faithfulness with which these organizations protected massive retaliation against attack from within.[86]

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[84] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 47-48.

[85] For a thorough discussion of this point, see Kaplan, The United States in the World Arena, pp. 316-19, and Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 398-401.

[86] The draft article, with departmental comments, is reproduced as Appendix A of General Taylor's book. See also the author's comments on pp. 43-46.

The budgetary basis for the Administration's actions

There can be little doubt that the adherence to a policy of massive retaliation by the Administration was dictated almost solely by the top-level view that a sound economy and a balanced budget were of paramount importance--more vital even than having the military answer to every threat. Massive retaliation was born of a spirit of retrenchment, and as the cost of increasingly complex military hardware--missiles, supersonic bombers, nuclear devices of all types--rose sharply, the Administration was forced to an ever greater dependence on this policy. In implementation of President Eisenhower's firm commitment to holding the line of defense spending, every increase in equipment costs, including the huge and completely unprecedented missile research, development, and test programs, had to be offset somewhere, generally by a reduction in force levels, with the Army bearing the brunt of the cuts. These manpower losses in turn, reinforced the need for a strategy that didn't depend on manpower--thus generating a tendency to boost massive retaliation a notch higher each year at the expense of limited war. As the budgetary shoe pinched tighter, the pre-Korea picture repeated itself, and the inter-service controversies rose to a fever pitch. Each branch was convinced that its own military philosophy and strategic doctrine represented an eternal truth, and that it must have control of the weapons necessary to destroy the enemy targets that threatened it, regardless of duplication.[87] A minor crisis was reached in the Symington airpower hearings of 1956, which generated almost as much heat

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[87] See Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, pp. 55-59, for an excellent, well-documented discussion of this point.

and smoke, and almost as little light, as the B-36 hearings of 1949. Rather than conducting a careful inquiry into our national strategy, however, this investigation accepted massive retaliation as a starting point, and concluded that more funds for air power were needed to implement it.[88]

The pattern of planning defense around a fixed budgetary total, a rather arbitrary total derived primarily from political considerations, was the rule in these years. A good example can be seen in 1956, when the military services had come up with a budget estimate of $48.5 billion for fiscal year 1958. Secretary Wilson rejected it out of hand, stating it represented an "unconscionable burden on the American taxpayer and was completely out of range of the nation."[89] It was felt that the country could "stand" no more than about $36 billion for defense, so the cuts were made which drove us further from a strong limited war capability.[90] A slight respite occurred in the fall of 1956, when the Suez crisis and the uprisings in Hungary stirred up the international situation, but soon the budget-determined pattern resumed.

The Administration's alternatives

Although budgetary considerations tended to keep strategy close to the massive retaliation pole, a pressure which the Administration only lightly resisted, this is not to say that the

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[88] U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on the Air Force, Hearings, Study of Air Power, 84th Cong., 2d Sess., 1956.

[89] New York Times, August 8, 1956, p. 1.

[90] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 37-38.

government was blind to the need for a limited war capability. Since it was too expensive to buy one outright, two alternative approaches were adopted to fill the need. It is questionable, however, if, even in the minds of their advocates, these policies were regarded as anything but poor substitutes for the kind of limited war forces we could develop by increased expenditures.

The first of these was an intensification of the collective security impulse. In September, 1954, SEATO took its place alongside our new mutual security treaties with South Korea, Japan, Formosa, and the Philippines in an attempt to plug all the holes in the Far Eastern dike. Its resemblance to NATO ended with the initials, however, because it embodied no defense organization, and pledged its signatories (only two of whom were on the Asiatic mainland) to "consult" in case of aggression. In the Middle East the Baghdad Pact was negotiated, under British leadership but with American support, in early 1955, tying Iran and Iraq to Pakistan and Turkey. This area also was the beneficiary of the Eisenhower Doctrine, announced in 1957. Under this plan, economic aid was provided and a "loose cloak of American military protection" was offered to any nation threatened by international communism. A Congressional resolution empowered the President to send troops to the area if needed. While limited war here might have been fought in case of aggression by proxy, a direct attack by the Soviet Union would probably call for a response with at least no geographic limits. In October, 1957, Secretary Dulles warned that "if there is an attack on Turkey by the Soviet Union, it would not mean a purely defensive operation by the United States, with

the Soviet Union a privileged sanctuary from which to attack Turkey."[91]

In Europe, NATO's military function was expanded from the twofold one of acting as a trip wire to signal communist aggression and slowing the Soviet Army's advance while our retaliatory force did its job, to include also that of meeting a less-than-ultimate threat with a decisive but less-than-ultimate response.[92]

The Asian and Middle Eastern pacts showed a preoccupation with preparations for a Korean-type war, marked by clear aggression, in which event the treaties would provide the legal grounds for our implementation of whatever type of retaliation we saw fit to use. Since these years also saw the continued recall of American troops from the communist perimeter to concentration points in the United States, however, it would seem the lessons of Indochina had not registered. Although these actions were taken with a view to filling a limited war gap, the outcome was perhaps not too unfairly expressed by Robert E. Osgood when he stated that "while expanding its political commitments, the government continued to reduce its military capacity to support them."[93]

But if pacts in these two areas were not too significant from the point of view of limited war, the NATO strategic shift

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[91] New York Times, October 17, 1957, pp. 1, 8.

[92] This historic shift in NATO defense doctrines was first announced in General Lauris Norstad's speech: "NATO: Deterrent and Shield," in Cincinnati on November 12, 1957. See Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, pp. 357-62, and Malcolm W. Hoag, "The Place of Limited War in NATO Strategy," NATO and American Security, ed. Klaus Knorr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 90-126, for more extended analysis.

[93] Osgood, Limited War, p. 228.

was, not only for NATO, but for United States strategy as well. It signified at least a partial abandonment of the dogma that there could be no limited war in Europe, and it served as a catalyst for the development of limited war thinking in the United States.

The second action taken by the Administration to offset their lack of limited war forces in the defense budget was to declare publicly that big wars and little wars were virtually the same thing, and could be fought with the same weapons. It seems likely that this logical restatement of the original massive retaliation idea was enunciated more to allay public fears of a presumed limited war impotence than to serve as an action policy designed to, in General Gavin's words, "keep from losing limited wars without preparing to win them."[94] In December, 1954, President Eisenhower told a press conference that he believed the distinction between little and big wars to be a bit artificial. He preferred to mold our security arrangements to meet the great threats, and improvise to meet the little ones, saying that if you can't win a big one you certainly can't win a little one.[95] This policy was reiterated by Secretary of the Air Force Donald A. Quarles in 1956, when he proposed that limited aggression be met with "the full force of atomic weapons." He stated that nuclear retaliation was as convincing a deterrent to brush fire war as it was to total war.[96] If the deterrent did not work, Secretary Quarles' view was that "if

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[94] Gavin, p. 129.

[95] New York Times, December 16, 1954, p. 24. Press conference rules prohibited direct quotation by reporters.

[96] Ibid., August 5, 1956, p. 34.

we have the strength required for global war, we certainly could meet any threat of less magnitude."[97] This philosophy was strongly supported by the air force at all levels from the Chief of Staff on down. The position of this service was that the Air Force, using nuclear weapons, represented the ideal tool for deterring, or winning, limited wars.[98] While this extreme partisan version seems highly questionable in the light of history, there is some justification for the administration's basic argument. Certainly the massive deterrent should have number one priority, and certainly many weapons and much manpower in the services was adaptable to any kind of war. But the specific weaknesses in limited war strategy, in ground forces, equipment, sea and air lift, and tactical air support that had hurt us so in Korea were not made any less weak by these statements. One of the most devastating critical attacks on this Administration policy is delivered by General Gavin:

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[97] Quoted in Part I of James E. King's incisive review of Kissinger's Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy. See "Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy: Limited Defense," The New Republic, July 1, 1957, p. 18.

[98] See, e.g., General Thomas D. White, "USAF Doctrine and National Policy," Air Force, XLI, No. 1 (January, 1958), 47-51; "Limited War: Where Do They Stand: Army, Navy, Air Force," Army-Navy-Air Force Register, May 23, 1959), pp. 14-16; Dale O. Smith, "Air Power in Limited War," Air Force, XLIVIII, No. 5 (May, 1955), 43-47; G. F. Seyland, "Tactical Airpower--Worldwide," Air Force, XLIVIII, No. 7 (July, 1955), 38-44; G. F. Seyland, "How the Reds Wage Limited War before It Starts," Armed Forces Management, V, No. 7 (April, 1959), 24-25; Robert C. Richardson, "Do We Need Unlimited Forces for Limited War?" Air Force, XLII, No. 3 (March, 1959), 53-56; and Henry P. Viccellio, "Composite Air Strike Force," Air University Quarterly Review, IX, No. 1 (Winter, 1956-1957), 27-38.

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> Limited war is a more highly specialized form of combat than global nuclear war, and we had better realize it and do something about it. It makes little sense to assume that since one has the power to wage general war successfully, by using a little bit of that capability you have, ipso facto, a little war. A thermonuclear-equipped B-52 can contribute little more to the solution of a limited local war than a 155-mm. gun can contribute to the apprehension of a traffic violator.
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> To some, limited war differs from general war in that general war lasts longer. This is not true. Limited war is not a matter of time. It is limited in the objectives sought, the means employed, and, usually, the area in which it is fought. Limited war may go on for many years, as Mao demonstrated in China. Furthermore, there may be several limited wars all going on at the same time. In fact, this is the most probable nature of future war: a slow, almost imperceptible transition of a bad economic and political situation into internal disorder.
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> . . . .
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> To cope with a Communist program of this nature requires good, imaginative, strategic planning, and highly specialized tactical forces. And they must be technically superior to anything that they encounter, decisively superior. Of the several functional areas in which a margin of tactical advantage may be found, mobility usually offers the greatest promise. However intelligence, communications, and missile fire power all require special consideration. All of these subjects, in their relationship to limited war, have been slighted at best, and grossly neglected at worst, in our defense planning in the past ten years.[99]

The trend to limited war

In spite of the budgetary pressures, the extreme partisanship of Air Force advocates, and the fire verbal commitments of the Administration, overall headway was made in the mid-1950s toward the development of a limited war strategy and the formation of limited war forces. Early in January, 1955, *Time* magazine carried an authoritative article on our military policy, in which it was stated that: "As a general theory, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have

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[99] Gavin, pp. 128-29.

accepted the idea of the double deterrent."[100] One of these, of course, was the massive deterrent to total war. The other was a limited deterrent to minor aggressions. The strategy for this latter was to have massive airlift capability and to use "atomic weapons as conventional weapons for tactical purposes." While this strategy was to rely primarily on indigenous ground forces, the use of United States troops was not ruled out. President Eisenhower shortly thereafter publicly supported the use of mobile american ground units--"light forces," rushed to the scene to supply tactical assistance if the local defenders were not able to handle the conflict.[101] As a deterrent, our forces should be committed to defend but not normally engaged--centrally located and ready to be moved anywhere.

The National Security Council's 1955 military policy review showed a marked trend away from massive retaliation, as has been discussed above, although in 1956 and 1957 this was revised to apply to underdeveloped areas only.[102] Secretary Dulles recognized the trend in 1956, when he stated that our theory of deterrence was to limit war--in the use of targets, weapons, and areas--to the minimum needed to deter and to repel aggression.[103]

Paralleling these developments was a change in the conception of war held by many influential Army strategists. Before Indochina, the Army's mission was still seen in the classic mold--that of

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[100] "The Pistol and the Claw," Time, January 16, 1955, pp. 16-17.

[101] New York Times, January 13, 1955, p. 14.

[102] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 26-48.

[103] Statement at a press conference, July 18, 1956. Cited in Peeters, p. 99.

maintaining a professional nucleus capable of rapid expansion by wartime mobilization to fight a large-scale ground war, such as the World Wars, and, to an extent, Korea. Since the Indochina setback had reinforced the lessons of the Greek Civil war, the British anti-guerrilla struggle in Malaya and the 'Huk' insurrection in the Philippines, a new role for the Army was envisaged by many. There was no time for mobilization in a brushfire war. Ground forces had to be instantly ready and highly mobile if they were not to be faced with a fait accompli on arrival at the scene of action. Operations would be as much political and non-military as they would be military, and probably more guerrilla than both. This trend, with many ramifications, has since steadily increased and drawn more adherents.[104]

By 1957 it was clear that the tide was running in favor of the limited war advocates. The Army's lonely defensive stand had been reinforced by the Navy and Marine Corps, and in what was widely accepted as a major policy change Secretary Dulles "gave for the first time public evidence of a loss of confidence in the policy of massive retaliation . . . ."[105] In an article in Foreign Affairs, he announced:

> During the ensuing years the military strategy of the free world allies has been largely based upon our great capacity to retaliate should the Soviet Union launch a war of aggression . . . .
>
> However the United States has not been content to rely upon a peace which could be preserved only by a capacity to destroy vast segments of the human race. Such a concept is acceptable only as a last alternative. In recent years there has been no other. But the resourcefulness of those who serve

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[104] Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, pp. 311-23.

[105] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, p. 55.

> our nation in the field of science and weapon engineering now shows that it is possible to alter the character of nuclear weapons. It seems now that their use need not involve vast destruction and widespread harm to humanity. Recent tests point to the possibility of possessing nuclear weapons the destructiveness and radiation effects of which can be confined substantially to predetermined targets.
>
> In the future it may thus be feasible to place less reliance upon deterrence of vast retaliatory power. It may be possible to defend countries by nuclear weapons so mobile, or so placed, as to make military invasion with conventional forces a hazardous attempt.[106]

In actuality this was not a major break in policy, but a slight acceleration of the tendency away from massive retaliation. Since Secretary Dulles' massive retaliation had never been as extreme as the critics had pictured it, the change is not one of major significance. It is still a strategy of limitation, as was his original, but it still does not accept the "normal" concept of limited war. To appreciate the pronouncement in context, it is necessary to trace the development of tactical nuclear weapons since the end of the Korean War.

Tactical Nuclear Weapons

As was seen above, Korea acted as a stimulus to the development of tactical nuclear weapons, which had begun in 1948.[107] First priority was assigned to the task of producing a bomb small enough to be carried in a jet fighter. Second priority was attached to the development of an atomic artillery shell, and third was a

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[106] John Foster Dulles, "Challenge and Response in United States Policy," Foreign Affairs, XXXVI, No. 1 (October, 1957), p. 31.

[107] Supra, chap. iii.

guided missile warhead.[108] As early as December, 1953, Admiral Radford was able to say that "today, atomic weapons have virtually achieved conventional status within our armed forces. Each military service is capable of putting this weapon into military use."[109] The massive retaliation concept--as its designers, not its critics, saw it--would not have been possible without tactical atomic weapons. It was on the early versions of this new type of battlefield ordnance that Secretary Dulles' whole retaliatory policy was based. By 1954 they were available in considerable diversity as operational tactical weapons and formed the basis of planning for the new look, which was designed to use their firepower to compensate for lack of manpower. On December 17 of that year the NATO Council decided to shape Western military strategy around the tactical and strategic use of all types of nuclear weapons, although they would have to remain under United States control, since the sharing of atomic secrets was prohibited by statute. NATO strategy at this point was clearly one of massive retaliation.

As these developments were made public, a vocal segment of informed opinion expressed strong criticism of the decisions--criticism which still continues and may have gained strength in the intervening years. In general it centered on two points: doubt that the use of tactical nuclear weapons would favor the West, and doubt that a war fought with them could remain limited. In spite of this undercurrent of popular opinion, however, government policy does not seem to have wavered.

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[108] Government policy on the development of tactical nuclear weapons through 1953 is traced in Ralph E. Lapp, The New Force: The Story of Atoms and People (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), chap. vii.

[109] New York Times, December 15, 1953, p. 31.

President Eisenhower first discussed tactical nuclear weapons at a press conference in January, 1955. On that occasion he stated that they would not "normally" be used in a minor operation, because he "couldn't conceive of an atomic weapon as being a police weapon . . ." He also stated he saw "no sharp line between tactical use of atomic weapons and strategic use."[110] At this juncture, then, it appears that although the weapon was being developed, no firm strategic concept for its use in limited war had been developed.

In March, 1955, in a series of speeches and press conferences, the President and the Secretary of State commented further on atomic weapons. Gradually a rough outline of their planned use emerged, which was, in general, "to utterly destroy military targets without endangering related civilian centers."[111] Seemingly changing his stand from that enunciated in January, the President said:

> Now in any combat where these things [atomic weapons] can be used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.
>
> I believe the great question about these things comes when you begin to get into those areas where you cannot make sure that you are operating merely against military targets. But with that one qualification, I would say, yes, of course they would be used.[112]

When queried at a press conference about the apparent inconsistency in his January and March statements, the President declared there was none, and drew a clear line between police actions, in which

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[110] Ibid., January 13, 1955, p. 14.

[111] Secretary of State Dulles. New Ibid., March 9, 1955, p. 4, and March 16, 1955, pp. 1, 2.

[112] Ibid., March 17, 1955, pp. 1, 4, 16.

tactical atomic weapons would not be used, and limited wars, in which they would. He declined to comment on the practical application of this distinction, as in the then-active Quemoy-Matsu dispute.[113]

In general, the conclusion drawn from these statements must be that the weapon was a significant part of our arsenal, but that the strategic problems of its use in limited war had not been solved.

The public quite predictably interpreted these announcements and clarifications as an indication of a shift of the government's policy from massive retaliation to graduated deterrence. While it is true that the latter name probably better describes the Administration's true policy than does massive retaliation, the statements of early 1955 do not seem to represent a significant shift of strategy.

In a view very close to the Administration's, the case for tactical nuclear weapons was well expressed by Thomas H. Murray, a member of the Atomic Energy Commission, in April, 1956:

> Wars in the future will be nuclear wars. This does not mean that they need be all-out nuclear wars. All-out nuclear war is no more acceptable than murder or suicide. It would be fatal to permit ourselves to drift into the habit of thinking about nuclear war only in all-out terms. The traditional moral effort of western civilization to impose limitations on warfare must be continued even in the nuclear age. A limited nuclear war is a possibility that our consciences can face and accept.[114]

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[113] Ibid., March 24, 1955, p. 18.

[114] U. S., Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, Control and Reduction of Armaments, part 6, 84th Cong., 2d sess., 1956, p. 536. For a broader view of Mr. Murray's beliefs and opinions about nuclear weapons, see his Nuclear Policy for War and Peace (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1960).

The administration, strongly spurred on by the Army, continued to press the development of these tactical arms, and by late 1956 the Army announced that it had activated its first division capable of fighting with nuclear weapons.[115] By now the critics sensed a new drawback to the all-encompassing weaponry shift that was taking place. They feared that the emphasis on tactical nuclear arms was so great that our forces were rapidly losing their ability to fight a conventional war--that our equipment and weapons would force us to turn any war into a nuclear one. Their fears were greatly heightened when the President, speaking about Formosa in January, 1957, stated that tactical atomic weapons were regarded "as an almost routine part of our equipment nowadays, and you would almost have to use them, the way our forces are organized in that area."[116]

When Secretary Dulles' article quoted above was published in Foreign Affairs in October, 1957, the technical breakthroughs in the development of small-yield weapons had been so great as to accelerate the gradual tendency of official policy away from massive retaliation. The wide diversity of types and power of tactical atomic weapons was now so far advanced over that which had existed when the massive retaliation policy was first enunciated, that this article can best be regarded as the announcement of a refinement of policy to keep up with hardware.

Limited War after Sputnik

By late 1957, United States strategy was, to some degree,

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[115] Halperin, Journal of Conflict Resolution, V, No. 2, 145.

[116] New York Times, January 24, 1957, p. 12.

on the fence. It was certainly not (and never had been), one of "pure" massive retaliation, yet elements of this were present. The centrally located, mobile, strategic reserve that was the justification for disengagement had not been created, yet our deployed strength was weak. We had committed ourselves to tactical atomic weapons, yet the Army was distinctly unhappy with their quantity, and with the general lack of modernization and flexibility. Many elements were pleading for a greater conventional weapons capacity. In the limited war field we were weak in air lift, in troop strength, and in firm inter-service task organization relationships.[117] Finally we had not developed a clear strategy for the employment of force, particularly in limited war, and had almost completely neglected the non-military aspects of limited war efforts. Limited war was seen as a distinct possibility in underdeveloped areas, although our reaction policy there was unclear, but there was very little consensus in government as to whether or not limited war was possible in Europe, and, if it was, whether tactical atomic weapons could be used.

This was the strategy scene in October, 1957, when the first Soviet earth satellite triggered a profound crisis within the United States. "This intrinsically harmless act of science and engineering . . . immediately set in motion forces in American political life which radically reversed the nation's ruling conception of its military problem, of the appropriate level of the budget, and of the role of science in its affairs."[118] Although

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[117] Rostow, The United States in the World Arena, p. 418 (note 19).

[118] Ibid., p. 366.

the administration had known for several years that the Soviet Union was fast closing the technological gap, and was already in the lead in some fields, the official secrecy prevailing in Washington had prevented this trend from being generally known. Nor was the public aware that the government's planning accepted Soviet equality, and in some cases superiority, in the field of modern weapons. Now, with sputnik following close on the heels of the Soviet's first successful intercontinental ballistic missile test, the dam burst. The reaction of a public opinion that had not been gradually prepared for the bitter facts applied strong pressures to the Administration. Both the general public and the more-vocal informed elite demanded that the obviously shifting balance of military power be altered. The growing uneasiness about national security that had been spreading through the ranks of attentive public for the past several years was now reinforced by the shock and astonishment of the man in the street, and the results made themselves felt in several ways.

The Gaither and Rockefeller Reports represented the elite consensus. Although the former has not been made public it is known that it recommended a radical increase in military expenditures. The Rockefeller Panel made a comprehensive analysis of our military posture and concluded that "all is not well with present U. S. security policies and operation. The over-all U. S. strategic concept lags behind developments in technology and in the world political situation." An imposing list of corrective steps was recommended, and the fiscal aspects of the increase were summarized by the comment: "We believe that the security of the United States transcends normal budgetary considerations and that the national

economy can afford the necessary measures."[119] The report stressed that limited war represented our "most likely threat," and recommended that the nation's limited war effort be vastly expanded.

> It is therefore imperative that in addition to our retaliatory force, we develop units which can intervene rapidly and which are able to make their power felt with discrimination and versatility. For this task we require modern sea lift and an airlift capacity we do not now possess. Our mobile forces must be tailored to the gamut of possible limited wars which may range from conflicts involving several countries to minor police actions. Limited wars may require a highly complicated weapons system including nuclear weapons. They may involve conventional forces capable of assisting friendly governments to resist border incursions.
>
> The effectiveness of our power thus depends on our unmistakable ability and willingness to oppose force with force at whatever level of intensity may be required. We do not now possess the necessary versatility.[120]

This report received widespread distribution, and because of the virtual unanimity of the diverse and distinguished membership of the panel on their recommendations, and the practically complete rejection of the new look which the report represented, it created an almost irresistible pressure for a change in defense policy, at least temporarily.[121]

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[119] Rockefeller Brothers Fund, International Security: The Military Aspect, Report of Panel II of the Special Studies Project (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1958), pp. 62-64.

[120] Ibid., p. 23.

[121] For a highly perceptive analysis of the background and effect of the Rockefeller Report see Kaplan, The United States in the World Arena, pp. 366-75.

The Eisenhower Administration, however, by granting a slight increase in military spending[122] and diverting most of the public attention to a Defense Department reorganization effort, managed to maintain the new look essentially intact until the sense of urgency for change was deflated by time. Thus the strongest effort to date urging the development of a powerful limited war capability and a revision of national strategy to accommodate it was successfully turned aside by an administration determined to hold the budgetary line even if it meant accepting what many felt were risks with the nation's military security. Not all was lost, however. As was the case with other forces urging a change toward limited war in the past, the residual effects moved national policy another incremental step away from massive retaliation.

The President gave some public recognition to the limited war problem in November, 1957, when he stated that the answer to our defense problem did not lie in a "misguided attempt to eliminate conventional forces and rely solely on retaliation,"[123] and Secretary Dulles a month later declared that massive retaliation and limited war were not actually exclusive. He underscored the unique problem of Europe in this respect, saying that there was no "final NATO doctrine on the subject" as yet.[124]

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[122] The budget increase was soon offset by price increases, and had negligible effect. The "Pentagon bookkeepers" also did their bit, as General Taylor recounts in tracing the progress of a $382 million increase for the Army through the "Pentagon pipeline until $5b billion eventually emerged." Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 53-54.

[123] New York Times, November 14, 1957, p. 14.

[124] Ibid., December 11, 1957, p. 4.

By the time of the National Security Council's annual determination of "Basic National Security Policy" for 1958, the outlook for limited war was more promising than it had been for several years.[125] The Army, Navy, and Marine Corps urged changes that would establish a finite limit to the retaliatory force, and proposed a flexible strategy that would permit fighting limited wars with or without nuclear weapons. They suggested that in all our strategy we be prepared to establish limited objectives in military operations. In Europe a reversal of active and passive roles of NATO arms was recommended, with the atomic retaliatory elements becoming the shield instead of the sword, and the limited war forces shifting from holding, delaying, units to a "flexible sword for parry, riposte, and attack." This would involve changing the official line that limited war was not possible in Europe, and would clash with General Norstad's newly announced policy. The Air Force, and General Nathan F. Twining, new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, opposed all these concepts and recommended a continuation of the status quo of massive retaliation. The proposed changes received only lukewarm support from Secretary Dulles, and the high hopes of the limited war advocates were dashed when the decision was eventually reached "to retain the language of the old guidance for the purpose of formulating the 1960 budget, but to keep the controversial parts under continuous review."

Based on this outline, the fiscal year 1960 defense budget was formulated soon after. The same dollar ceilings as in 1959 were

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[125] The basic source for the material in this paragraph is Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 57-65.

retained for each service,[126] dooming strategy to remain frozen in the pattern of the last several years. Actually, the limited war aspects deteriorated somewhat because of this 1960 budget, since a relatively larger portion of the funds were absorbed by spiralling costs of the newer missile systems. Limited war advocates, led by General Taylor, fought hard on behalf of their beliefs that our defense orientation was excessively one-sided, but to no avail. The only significant gain from the 1960 budget was achieved in the field of public education. Sensing the violent divergence of opinions among the Joint Chiefs, Senator Johnson's Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee called them individually to testify openly on their reservations to the budget. The depth of the schism existing within the Pentagon was thus first fully revealed to the public, adding weight to the already-existing uneasy doubts about our security, and resulting in increased pressure on the Administration. President Eisenhower stood firm, however. In answer to a press conference question, reflecting the public anxiety, as to whether our ground forces were capable of handling a brush fire situation, he replied: "I'd say this: If we can't, then the war's gotten beyond a brush fire and you've got to take something--you've got to think in much, much bigger terms."[127] The answer well-reflected the discontinuity in the Administration's strategic spectrum, with a large gap between a brush fire or police action, which could be suppressed without

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[126] Since 1955 these had been about 46 percent for the Air Force, 28 percent for the Navy and Marine Corps, and 27 percent for the Army. Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[127] New York Times, March 12, 1959, p. 12.

such effort, and something "much, much bigger," which would have to be fought on a completely different scale. The gap centered on limited war.

Limited War Action

In the summer of 1958, while the fiscal year 1960 budget battles were being fought in Washington, two limited war situations occurred on opposite sides of the world.

Lebanon

In July, when Camille Chamoun's pro-West government of Lebanon appealed for American help against a threatening insurrection supported by outside forces, our reaction was almost instantaneous. Secretary Dulles strongly advised the sending of troops, on the belief that the risks of not taking action were greater than those of doing so. President Eisenhower agreed, and gave the order. The speed with which this decision to employ ground forces in a limited action was made suggests the extent to which the Administration's original massive retaliation philosophy had been modified by the pressures of the past four years.

The cardinal reason behind the decision to intervene was that, in Secretary Dulles' words:

> We were convinced that if we did not, there would not be a single one of the [world's] small relatively weak governments . . . which would feel safe from the potential threat of individual aggression and assassination such as took place in Iraq.
>
> We acted to give a feeling of stability to such governments, so that they would not . . . feel that to be a friend of the United States was a liability in terms of independence or of life itself.[128]

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[128] Quoted in Drummond and Coblentz, p. 193.

The intervention threw several limited war problems into sharp relief. One was the matter of conference and agreement with allies. It is widely believed that NATO members were not consulted in advance, even though the action involved the redeployment of NATO divisions and increased the risk of Soviet pressure on Europe.[129] Unpublished diplomatic records reveal that this is not the case, that the likelihood of the move was presented to NATO ambassadors in closed session before the move was ordered.[130] Objections of allies were overridden in this case, but the strong possibility that future United States action might be hamstrung by reluctant friends must be clearly faced.

A second question regarding limited war raised by Lebanon, also a controversial one, concerns the adequacy of our effort, particularly as regards airlift. Advocates of limited war argue that the airlift was proved completely inadequate; that movement of even this small contingent, faced with no opposition, was sluggish. They point to the fact that the strategic Army Corps, based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and designed for just this sort of operation, could not be used because of lack of air transport. They also maintain that our forces were too weak to accomplish anything, and that their equipment was obsolete. They further charge that the movement of two divisions out of Germany weakened our most sensitive area when international tensions were highest, and that the tieup of our strategic airlift reduced the mobility of the Strategic Air Command at a time when deterrent was

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[129] See, e.g., Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice, pp. 115-16.

[130] Drummond and Coblentz, pp. 194-95.

most needed.[131] They regard Lebanon as conclusive proof that our fixation on massive retaliation had emasculated our limited war ability, and that a major defense shift was called for. The Administration's supporters said that we moved into Lebanon with all the speed, force, and efficiency required, and that a greater effort could have been put forth if needed. Careful analysis would seem to indicate that the critics are nearer the truth. It is undeniable that the intervention was sufficient in this case, but it is highly doubtful that the movement could have been significantly increased in speed and impact had opposition made this necessary.

An interesting sidelight on the Administration's limiting attempts is provided by General Taylor, who reports that an Army Honest John rocket, which was available in the Navy transports off Beirut, was not allowed ashore because it could fire atomic warheads as well as conventional ones.[132] This limitation should hit hard at the school that maintains tactical atomic weapons will be used in all future limited wars. It suggests that if our forces do not have strong conventional arms they may be at a severe disadvantage when the decision-makers decide that the risks of escalation are too great for the use of small nuclear weapons to be permitted.

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[131] See, e.g., Peter Braestrup, "Limited War and the Lessons of Lebanon," The Reporter, April 30, 1959, pp. 25-27; and Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice, p. 96.

[132] Taylor, The Uncertain Trumpet, pp. 9-10. As a result, reports Peter Braestrup, the Army began to put 105-mm. howitzers for conventional warfare back into pentomic divisions. The Reporter, April 30, 1959, p. 27.

Lebanon emerged as a dramatic cold war victory for the United States. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, this action did not have any conclusive effect on the nation's strategy. The increased likelihood of limited war it seemed to demonstrate, however, helped push the administration in that direction. It underscored the paramount need for speed in deployment of troops, and threw new light on the limiting process. Finally, it provided an invaluable training exercise for the services themselves.

Quemoy

In August, 1958, while the United States was still deeply involved in the Lebanon intervention, the Chinese Communists commenced a heavy bombardment of the offshore islands, Quemoy and Matsu. This was the first overt move here for more than three years, and as the communist pressure and threats built up it appeared that an invasion might be imminent. The commitment of the United States to defend these islands in the event of attack had purposely been left vague in the Presidential messages and the Congressional resolution on Formosa that had followed the 1954-55 bombardment and the Tachens evacuation. This same deliberate ambiguity was pursued, along the lines of Secretary Dulles' own highly honed art of brinkmanship, when the 1958 crisis arose.[133]

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[133] For a brief but brilliant discussion of brinkmanship see Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict, pp. 199-201. The key element of brinkmanship, as Schelling sees it, is "the deliberate creation of a recognizable risk of war, a risk that one does not completely control. It is the tactic of deliberately letting the situation get somewhat out of hand, just because its being out of hand may be intolerable to the other party and force his accommodation. It means . . . showing him that if he makes a contrary move he may disturb us so that we slip over the brink whether we want to or not, carrying him with us."

One of the Secretary's first statements, designed to keep the range of possible American responses wide, was to the effect that it would be "highly hazardous for anyone to assume that an attempt to attack and conquer these islands would remain a limited operation."[134] As the Communist pressure increased, evidences of the Administration's resolve to offer some form of resistance or retaliation occurred with increasing frequency. As the crisis continued, the Eisenhower-Dulles stand hardened into implacable firmness, in spite of tremendous criticism and violent attacks from liberals at home and from abroad, particularly Europe. It was now not the real estate that was at issue, but a principle: not to retreat under fire. In the end, with only a minor military involvement, the Communists retreated and the United States had scored a signal victory. Had we stooped to appeasement in the face of this limited probe our dismayed friends and allies, even those who protested our action, would have been driven another step to neutralism. If we backed down here and then chose to resist the next aggression, the reduced credibility of our will to resist the second time would have been costly in terms of time, lives, and effort.

An excellent example of mutual limitations can be seen even in the almost negligible military operations of the Quemoy incident. Communist China has always claimed a territorial sea of twelve miles, yet she permitted our ships to approach to within our recognized limit of three miles of Quemoy without being fired on. Nationalist landing vessels, to which we transferred supplies, were

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[134] New York Times, August 24, 1958, pp. 1, 3.

then taken under fire as soon as they crossed the three-mile limit. In return for this unspoken agreement, we did not use our aircraft against Chinese shore batteries.[135] The fact that these limitations remained effective despite their illogic and their tacit nature teaches much about the limiting process.[136]

The Last Years of the New Look

As the Eisenhower years drew to a close the military strategy pattern was still overwhelmingly that of the new look. Minor modifications had been made since its inception, the most noticeable of which were a slowly increasing awareness of the limited war problem, and a relaxing of the early dogma of massive retaliation; however the essentials of the new look--a budgetary determination of military strategy, a machines-instead-of-men philosophy, a tendency toward disengagement and withdrawal, and an overreliance on atomic air power as the answer to all military problems--remained dominant. While the statements, proclamations, and announced policies of the Eisenhower administration sometimes seemed to indicate a recognition and an appreciation of the need for a limited war capability, the budget patterns, which in the final analysis shaped strategy, were heavily one-sided in their emphasis on the massive retaliatory forces.

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[135] Kissinger, The Necessity for Choice, p. 61.

[136] For a penetrating and highly original discussion of the limiting process see Thomas C. Schelling, "Bargaining, Communication, and Limited War," Journal of Conflict Resolution, I, No. 1 (March, 1957), pp. 19-36. This article was reprinted, in slightly altered form, as chap. iii of Schelling's The Strategy of Conflict.

The shift toward a limited capability had been slight despite the tremendous pressure of such events as Indochina, the Rockefeller Report, and Lebanon. In his budget message of January, 1956, while elaborating on military policy, President Eisenhower had emphasized: "It is essential to have a stable, long-range defense program suited to our needs which avoids fluctuation in response to transitory pressures."[137] In a remarkably similar statement more than three years later, which well illustrates the consistency of his policies, the President said it was necessary to follow a plan, and that "it would be ruinous to be pushed off this plan time and again by something described as a crisis." Every time one of these incidents occurs, "whether it is sputniks or it's Quemoy . . . or whatever it is," everyone has a "new answer."[138]

But if the 1953-1960 new look policies were relatively consistent, they consistently subordinated limited war problems. Not only have limited war forces--manpower and equipment--suffered at the hands of the budgetary surgeons, but, more importantly, the development of strategy, which in our system is largely determined by the apportionment of appropriations, has inevitably suffered. Strategy must be designed to take use of the forces available, and since these were tailored to the massive retaliation pattern, an effective limited war strategy was precluded. Furthermore, since several years at least must elapse between the basic policy decisions and the emergence of a force of trained personnel

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[137] U. S., Congressional Record, 84th Cong., 2d Sess., 1956, CII, Part 1, 562 (Italics mine.)

[138] New York Times, March 12, 1959, p. 12.

with appropriate hardware, our posture for the next few years had already been determined by the era of the new look.[139] Limited war considerations were so subordinated in this period that even at the end of eight years of the new look there was no centralized limited war planning organization in the Pentagon. Such planning as was done took place in the field by the unified commanders, resulting, in many cases, in several theater commanders all relying on the same strategic reserve to carry out different tasks, without regard for the fact that all might call for it at the same time.[140]

As the Eisenhower Administration closed out its ledger, with the new look still the official policy, and with the underlying derogation of limited war still intact, the opposition groups--in the Joint Chiefs, in Congress, in the informed elite, and in the general public--had all arrived at a relatively firm consensus as to its shortcomings and the changes that were needed.

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[139] See Klaus Knorr, Is the American Defense Effort Enough? Memorandum Number 14 (Princeton: Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1957), p. 11, for a discussion of this and related problems arising from our overconcentration on massive retaliation.

[140] On this point see General Taylor's June 14, 1960, executive session testimony in U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Policy Machinery, Hearings, Organizing for National Security: The National Security Council and the Department of State and Defense, Part V, 86th Cong., 2d sess., 1960, pp. 773-94. The entire hearings, and the supplementary documents for these hearings, by Senator Jackson's subcommittee are a most valuable source for matters of national strategy and military policy.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW FRONTIER AND THE CONVENTIONAL OPTION

Pre-Election Trends

Preceding the election campaign proper, there occurred, in the winter of 1959-1960, an extended public defense debate. On one side was the Eisenhower administration, maintaining that it knew best what was needed in the defense field, and permitting its "long pull" effort to be only slightly expanded by the increasing Soviet threat and higher military cost levels.[1] Opposed, attacking the Administration for misleading the American people, and urging considerably higher defense expenditures, was a strong coalition arranged in two power groupings--Congressional Democrats and influential businessmen, nominally Republican, but in practice virtually non-partisan.[2]

Although the primary issue was one of overall strategic posture, limited war considerations came to the fore on occasion. It was pointed out that spending for non-nuclear hardware had dropped from $3.7 billion in 1954 to $600 million in 1960, and that

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[1] The defense budget had risen from the 1957-1958 level of $38 billion to about $41 billion for fiscal year 1961.

[2] Leading the latter group were such personages as Thomas S. Gates, Jr., who resigned his position as Vice President of the Convair Division of General Dynamics Corporation in order to criticize the government on defense; Robert Lovett, former Secretary of Defense; and Thomas Watson, Jr., President of IBM. See Aviation Week, February 29, 1960, p. 27, and March 14, 1960, p. 21.

over the same period the Army had been cut from one and a half million men to 870,000, with six full divisions having been retired and the remainder reduced in strength.[3] Senator Johnson's Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee found the Army "in urgent need of modernization," having only one-sixth of the needed rifles and one-tenth of the necessary tanks.[4]

As might have been predicted, however, the slight increase in defense appropriations that the Congressional Democrats were able to push through had almost no effect on limited war forces. As a result, much of the accumulated pressure carried over into the campaign itself, and caused Vice President Nixon to make a marked shift in his defense campaigning, away from President Eisenhower's budgetary primacy and toward Governor Rockefeller's heavy-defense-increase proposals.

Just prior to the national political conventions, an event occurred which was to have a profound effect on the course of the forthcoming security debate. In May, 1960, the collapse of the Paris summit conference changed the entire defense picture. President Eisenhower's answer was a modest increase in the "space age" programs--Polaris, Minuteman, the B-70, the airborne alert, Nemos, etc.[5] His critics, particularly the Senate Democrats, came out strongly for significant across-the-board defense increases, generally in the neighborhood of $3 to $3.5 billion. Senator John

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[3]"Army Makes a Comeback: What It Will Get and Why," U. S. News, March 20, 1961, pp. 48-49.

[4]Ibid.

[5]"Defense Shifts, Party Wrangling," Business Week, May 28, 1960, pp. 29-30.

F. Kennedy was one of the first to link the summit collapse to the Eisenhower budget, claiming that Khrushchev would not have so abused the President unless he had military superiority. In this he was quite vocally supported by Senators Russell and Symington.[6]

Against this background the national conventions selected candidates Kennedy and Nixon as their standard-bearers, and agreed upon their respective platforms. Concerning the defense planks of these latter documents, the New York Times declared: "A visitor from another planet would find it hard to believe that the two platforms are talking about the same defense establishment."[7] The differences concerned generalities, however. They revolved about the level of expenditures and the meeting of the Soviet threat, and both practically ignored the question of limited war, giving almost no hint of the startling strategy revelation that was to take place on the new frontier. The Republican platform reaffirmed massive retaliation, encompassed the stiffening urged by Governor Rockefeller, and put its greatest emphasis on the "new generation of weapons." It did give lip service to the importance of "highly mobile and versatile forces deployed to deter or check local aggressions and 'brush fire wars' which might bring on all-out nuclear war."[8] The Democratic platform was almost equally vague about limited war. It did, however, go one step further than the Republican platform and pledge to "recast our military capacity in order to provide forces and weapons of a diversity, balance, and

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[6] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[7] New York Times, July 28, 1960, p. 15.

[8] For excerpts from and comments on the Republican platform see ibid., July 27, 1960, p. 12, and Aviation Week, August 1, 1960, pp. 28-29.

mobility sufficient in quantity and quality to deter both limited and general aggressions."[9] It also urged a strengthening of our conventional capability, although this was not forcefully presented.

The same slight difference in limited war positions was discernible between the candidates. Vice President Nixon had backed off, somewhat reluctantly, from the extreme pole of the massive retaliation spectrum, under strong pressure from Governor Rockefeller and other influential Republicans. Senator Kennedy, who had attacked massive retaliation in 1956 as having "stultified the development of new policy,"[10] but who had been relatively inactive in the defense debate until the missile gap issue of late 1959, seemed to favor boosting limited war efforts proportionately within the entire defense program. Thus a comparison of the candidates, as well as of the platforms, gave little indication of what was to come in limited war strategy.[11]

The same was true also of the campaign. Although defense was not a major issue, it certainly loomed larger than in 1956, and the bipartisanship concerning national security policy that had come to be a general hallmark of cold war campaigns was breached to a greater extent than previously. One reason for this past pattern was that the Democrats, while favoring an increased defense

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[9] See N.Y. Times, July 17, 1960, p. 22, for a discussion of the Democratic platform's defense plank.

[10] U. S., Congressional Record, 85th Cong., 2d Sess., 1958, CIV, Part 14, 17571.

[11] A perceptive, informed observer might have accurately predicted much of what President Kennedy's defense policies would be from the fact that he selected the now-retired General Gavin as his military adviser during the campaign, and was known to have been greatly impressed by Gavin's book, War and Peace in the Space Age.

effort, had been reluctant to push it because of the "war party" label, gained in Korea.

> Although public opinion polls indicated widespread support for stronger defense, they also indicated that when questioned as to which party was most likely to prevent a future war, the voters invariably chose the Republicans by a substantial margin. To counteract their identification with war, which was unpopular, the Democrats also had to play down their identification with armaments, which were popular.[12]

Now there seemed to be an increased public awareness that military force and peace were related, so the Democrats began to break the old mold. That there was still an ambivalence of feeling within this party can be seen in the failure of the Democratic Congress to push through defense appropriation increases during the "lottail" session after the conventions.

But if defense was relatively more important in the campaign than it had been in the previous one, limited war was still ignored. Even in the "counterforce vs. finite deterrent" argument, it was not generally stressed that while the former posture could, in some measure, deter both large and small wars, the latter could only deter large ones, and thus would require a limited war capability as a companion piece.

Limited War in the Interregnum

A number of developments took place between President Kennedy's election and his launching of the new frontier in January, 1961. Before discussing them, however, it is desirable to comment on the general state of military policy in the winter of 1960-1961. As a result of the increased emphasis placed on defense by both

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[12] Samuel P. Huntington, "National Defense and the Campaign," New Leader, September 12, 1960, p. 16.

parties in the campaign, coming on top of the already heavy pressure for greater armed might, the new look slipped another notch. In December, 1960, military analyst Jack Raymond wrote:

> The worst period of Army famine appears to be over. Army procurement chiefs have begun to buy various lightweight armored vehicles, personnel carriers, tank destroyers, M-60 tanks armed with 152-mm. guns, and helicopters which can airlift an infantry squadron [sic] with weapons.[13]

He noted, however, that the Army did not have a single item that could be airlifted. A good summary of strategic thought is the following, prepared by Charles H. Donnelly of the Legislative Reference Service.

> At the end of 1960 it was still the policy of the United States that, if involved in combat, nuclear weapons would be used in any case where such use would be to the advantage of the United States. There was a growing belief, however, that the conventional arms capabilities of our Armed Forces should be substantially increased so that they might avoid, someday, being placed in the position of having to respond with nuclear weapons to a nonnuclear attack or to face defeat because of their weakness in conventional weapons.[14]

The outgoing Republicans exhibited divergent trends. On the limited war side of the scale were such items as a well-received NATO defense study made by Robert R. Bowie, Director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, and former Head of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, which urged, among other things, an increase in NATO ground strength sufficient to make limited war with conventional weapons an actual possibility in

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[13] Jack Raymond, "The State of Our Defenses," Foreign Policy Bulletin, December 1, 1960, p. 47.

[14] U. S., Library of Congress, Legislative Reference Service, United States Defense Policies in 1960, 87th Cong., 1st Sess., 1961, House Document No. 207, p. 24.

Europe.[15] Opposed to this trend were the persistent rumors, seemingly factually oriented, that President Eisenhower was planning a significant troop withdrawal from Europe, to help balance the budget and to assist in ending the net outflow of gold.[16] The latter possibility was lent support by the prevalence of plans for NATO nuclear sharing, a step which would drive posture further than ever from a conventional capability.

The question of which way the Republicans were going, however, seemed to be answered with finality a few days before President Kennedy took office, when President Eisenhower submitted his 1962 budget. The new look was still the earmark of defense policy. Strength was pared in an attempt to offset rising costs. Nuclear weapons were still the basis of military posture, in spite of the difficulties this posed for a coherent coalition strategy in Europe and for a meaningful answer to ambiguous challenges in the grey areas. The NATO section of the budget message read "troop withdrawal" between every line. While the text of the message spoke of modernizing and improving the tactical forces--ground forces, tactical air wings, and military airlift--the dollar allocations themselves presaged a continuation of the new look. The $42 billion budget provided for an Army of 870,000 men in fourteen divisions, a Navy of 625,000 men and 817 ships, three Marine divisions and three Marine air wings, with a total Corps strength of 175,000, and an 84-wing Air Force manned by 823,000 men.[17]

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[15] New York Times, October 13, 1960, pp. 1, 18, and November 24, 1960, p. 1.

[16] Ibid., December 17, 1960, p. 13, January 16, 1961, pp. 1, 10, and January 17, 1961, p. 11.

[17] For the President's 1962 budget message see Ibid., January 17, 1961, pp. 16-17.

During the interregnum, the direction that defense policy would take under the new Democratic Administration was unclear. The development that received the most publicity was the much-heralded Symington Plan. This study, chaired by the Air-Force-oriented Senator, and drawn up with the assistance of a five-man study group including incoming Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell L. Gilpatric, was given to the President-elect in early December. It was basically a new defense reorganization plan, and the furor it aroused obscured most of the side issues which also began to come to light at this time. The Symington Plan called for the replacement of the present command structure with "functional" commands--strategic, tactical (for limited war), continental defense, and others, operating under a more centralized structure that downgraded the service departments.[18] It was, quite naturally, strongly supported by the Air Force and vigorously opposed by the Navy, with both the Army and the majority of the Congressional spokesmen, led by Carl Vinson of the House Armed Services Committee, leaning to the opposition. The top level organization proposals, which could tend to centralize power for military decisions, were the chief targets. Almost unnoticed in the uproar over the Symington Plan was the emergence of relatively firm plans for budgetary increases to overcome the "missile gap" and to increase capability for limited war, through expansion and modernization of Army and

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[18] For balanced treatments of the Symington Plan see The Economist, December 10, 1960, p. 1131; "Streamlining Defense: What Kennedy Plans," U. S. News, December 5, 1960, pp. 80-83; "A Defense Shake-up? What It Would Mean," ibid., December 19, 1960, pp. 42-45; and Louis Kraar's report in Wall Street Journal, December 7, 1960, p. 1.

marines, and increased anti-submarine warfare and airlift capacity.[19]

President-elect Kennedy and the incoming Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, were noncommittal about the Symington Plan, however, and in the light of subsequent developments it appears that the proposed legislative reorganization package was shelved, to be accomplished less-spectacularly by piecemeal evolution. Some signs of this trend will be examined below. Many of the budgetary plans which appeared at the same time, however, were almost immediately implemented.

Having possibly greater impact upon top-level thinking in the preinauguration period was a Foreign Affairs article by now-retired General Taylor.[20] President-elect Kennedy had been greatly impressed by the General's book, The Uncertain Trumpet, and the new article, outlining urgent defense needs in the limited war field, appears in retrospect to have become practically a blueprint for the major strategy shifts of the new frontier.[21]

First Moves

The basic changes that were to come were, on inauguration day, almost completely unforeseen by informed sources and attentive

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[19] U. S. News, December 5, 1960, pp. 80-83.

[20] Maxwell D. Taylor, "Security Will Not Wait," Foreign Affairs, XXXIX, No. 2 (January, 1961), 174-84.

[21] Also exerting strong influence on the new administration's policy was an Army document of May, 1960, written by Major General Charles D. Bonesteel. Declaring that "continued primary reliance on massive nuclear retaliation to deter all forms of aggression will limit the United States strategy to a choice between retreat or acceptance of the probability of mutual destruction of the United States and the U.S.S.R.," the paper urged the creation of expanded, balanced, dual-capable forces, and set forth a blueprint for action much like that actually followed. See Jack Raymond, New York Times, March 5, 1961, p. 10.

public alike. Even so perceptive and privileged a military analyst as Hanson W. Baldwin caught no hint of the forthcoming strategy revolution. In a January 19, 1961, article he opined that President Kennedy would probably not differ much from President Eisenhower on military policy, and in Baldwin's outline of likely moves, limited war was not even mentioned.[22]

Initial trends

The first indication of things to come, although it was not recognized as such at the time, was the defense portion of President Kennedy's State of the Union Message of January 30, 1961. In pertinent part it stated:

> . . . in the past, lack of a consistent, coherent military strategy, the absence of basic assumptions about our national requirements and the faulty estimate and duplication arising from inter-service rivalries have all made it difficult to assess accurately how adequate--or inadequate--our defenses really are.
>
> I have, therefore, instructed the Secretary of Defense to reappraise our entire defense strategy. . . . I have asked for preliminary conclusions by the end of February--and I shall then recommend whatever legislation, budgetary or executive action is needed in the light of these conclusions.
>
> In the meantime, I have asked the Secretary of Defense to initiate immediately three steps most clearly needed now.
>
> First, I have directed prompt action to increase our airlift capacity. Obtaining additional air transport mobility--and obtaining it now--will better assure the ability of our conventional forces to respond, with discrimination and speed, to any problem at any spot on the globe at a moment's notice. In particular it will enable us to meet any deliberate effort to avoid or divert our forces by starting limited wars in widely scattered parts of the globe.[23]

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[22] Ibid., January 19, 1961, p. 12.

[23] Ibid., January 31, 1961, p. 16. The airlift augmentation involved an increase in production of Lockheed C130- turboprop aircraft from 30 to 39 (partially offset by a 26-plane cut in C130-A production), and an addition of 30 Boeing C135 jets, for a net increase of 53 aircraft. Aviation Week, February 6, 1961, p. 31.

The other two steps immediately implemented were a step-up in the Polaris submarine program and an overall acceleration of the missile effort. Possibly because of the attention directed to these two developments, or possibly because of the glaring spotlight focused on the missile gap issue at this time, the airlift augmentation and the increasing frequency of limited war pronouncements by the Administration were not regarded as significant. This is somewhat ironic, as the Pentagon, at White House direction, was now bending all efforts to emphasize limited war capability--tactics, weapons, and forces--and to play down strategic retaliatory matters.[24]

Another key element of the Kennedy formula in the first month was the formation of four, civilian-manned "task groups" in the Pentagon for the study of defense issues. One, headed by Defense Comptroller Charles J. Hitch, examined strategic, or general war, systems. A second, chaired by Paul H. Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, studied all aspects of limited war. Two others dealt with research and development, and bases and installations.[25] The purpose of these reviews was well stated by Secretary McNamara:

> I should make it clear that these studies constitute only our first effort on a much larger problem. . . . This large reexamination will require many months of intensive effort. . . . What we have sought

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For more detailed information see Secretary McNamara's and General Thomas D. White's testimony in U. S., Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, Military Procurement Authorization, Fiscal Year 1962, 87th Cong., 1st Sess., 1961, pp. 16-17, 318-19. This latter document cited hereafter as Senate, Procurement Hearings, 1962.

[24] See Jack Raymond, New York Times, February 11, 1961, p. 8.

[25] For a broader discussion of the four task groups see the report by Louis Kraar in Wall Street Journal, February 16, 1961, pp. 1, 12.

> to do in these preliminary studies is to identify and deal with those elements of the problem which, because of their urgency, should not await completion of the more extensive studies of our total national security position.[26]

The limited war group, in making its study, asked the services for estimates of augmentation needed to enable the United States to fight two Korea-type limited wars simultaneously, one in Africa, one in Southeast Asia.[27] The results were staggering to Pentagon economists. The first run produced a need for $9 billion in additional defense funds. This was later pared down to $4.3 billion, of which some one billion dollars found its way into the task group's "quick fix" report.[28]

By this time it was becoming apparent to the observant that the idea of conventional limited war was being resurrected by the Kennedy Administration from its Eisenhower-constructed crypt.

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[26] U. S., Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, Military Posture Briefings, 87th Cong., 1st Sess., 1961, pp. 633-34. Cited hereafter as House, Posture Briefings, 1961.

[27] Ground rules for the projections reportedly gave the enemy five lightly-armed divisions in each theater, with no use of nuclear weapons by either side, no overt intervention by Soviets or Chinese, and no geographic escalation. The American response could not employ SAC, and had to leave our committed forces, i.e., those in SEATO, Korea, untouched. Charles J. V. Murphy, "Arena Strategy: Is a Shift in the Making?" Fortune, LXIII, No. 4 (April, 1961), 113.

[28] Of the total amount considered necessary, the Army would absorb some $1.7 billion in expanding from 875,000 men in 14 divisions to 925,000 men in 15, and in acquiring considerable new equipment. The Navy's additional requirements were some 50,000 men and two aircraft carriers with air groups. The Marine Corps augmentation would be about 22,000 men. Total Navy-Marine cost was $2.5 billion. Air Force planners rejected the idea of fighting such conflicts without nuclear weapons, claiming the costs would be ridiculously high. Ibid., and Louis Kraar, Wall Street Journal, March 24, 1961, p. 21.

indications were everywhere. The Administration was developing plans for still more airlift, in addition to that mentioned in the State of the Union message. A sealift increase was also being worked up, as were new and better non-nuclear arms for the Army, and such all-purpose equipment as short-takeoff-and-landing (STOL) aircraft.[29] In spite of violent Air Force objections, the Kennedy planners apparently saw nothing inconsistent about working on both the missile gap and limited war at the same time. The President himself stressed this dual aspect at his first press conference after receiving Secretary McNamara's defense survey. Stating that "part of his [McNamara's] recommendation is to strengthen conventional forces," the Chief Executive denied that it represented a shift from nuclear to non-nuclear arms, but declared instead that it represented a "general strengthening of our armed forces," that the increase in emphasis on conventional forces would not mean a lessening of emphasis on nuclear weapons.[30]

The trend was given a boost by the publication of Khrushchev's January 6, 1961, report on the results of the Conference of Eighty-one Communist Parties in Moscow in November, 1960. Here he made it clear that the major Soviet emphasis would be on the support of "wars of national liberation"--his terminology for such limited wars as Algeria, Cuba, Laos, and the Congo.[31]

Also coming to the fore in these first weeks was a new development closely related to limited war--the rise of the idea of

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[29] Ibid., February 16, 1961, p. 12.

[30] New York Times, March 2, 1961, p. 12.

[31] Current Digest of the Soviet Press, February 22, 1961, pp. 8-14.

arms control. Formerly, an unhealthy dichotomy had existed between military strategy and disarmament. Planning in these areas had been done by different groups, with no common ties. Now they were linked by the field of arms control, which, in many of its ramifications, extended into the heart of limited war strategic thinking--the limitations concept.[32] This could well be regarded as a major breakthrough in politico-military thought.

In spite of all indications, however, so firmly ingrained in public thought was the new look and massive retaliation pattern that the direction in which military policy was tending was not perceived until a major tremor shook Washington and the allies--the Rusk Memo leak.

The Rusk Memo Leak

On February 27, 1961, the Washington Star printed the gist of what was purported to be a secret memorandum from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to the Secretary of Defense, proposing that even a massive attack on Europe be countered with conventional weapons. The report created an uproar at home and abroad. Massive retaliation advocates throughout the country, urged on by the Air Force, denounced it bitterly, and Washington was flooded with queries from worried foreign governments.[33] The facts of this report were immediately branded as "gross distortions" by the State Department,

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[32] See George A. Kelly, "Arms Control and the Military Establishment," Military Review, XLI, No. 1 (January, 1961), 62-72; and Robert Endicott Osgood, "Stabilizing the Military Environment," American Political Science Review, LV, No. 1 (March, 1961), 24-39.

[33] New York Times, February 28, 1961, p. 5, and March 1, 1961, pp. 1, 4.

and were denounced by Secretary Rusk as "highly inaccurate." In their enthusiasm of denial, State Department spokesmen even said that reports that local attacks outside Europe should be met by American troops using conventional weapons were "preposterous." Secretary Rusk declared he merely favored a "strengthening of the non-nuclear aspects of . . . defense, as well as the maintenance of its nuclear aspects."[34]

Possibly on cue from the Administration, James Reston of the New York Times sought to pour oil on the troubled waters by claiming this as "another big controversy over very little," and repeating the party line.[35] A more astute appraisal, however, was given by the perceptive Walter Millis, who took Reston to task for belittling the significance of the memo, and termed it a "very serious issue indeed," a major strategy shift. He continued:

> The dilemma is so difficult that, General Maxwell Taylor tells us, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were unable to resolve it in the whole time that he was a member of the body. It is so difficult that the Kennedy campaign promises, so far from offering a solution, did not even recognize its existence.[36]

In retrospect, it is obvious that this look (by Air Force extremists[37]) represented the first public indication of the death of both massive retaliation and the new look, and the birth of a new United States military strategy.[38]

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[34] State Department Bulletin, March 27, 1961, p. 399.

[35] New York Times, March 1, 1961, p. 32.

[36] Ibid., March 9, 1961, p. 28.

[37] Ibid., July 6, 1961, p. 10.

[38] For additional information on the significance of the Gaza Strip test see "Changes in U. S. War Strategy?" U. S. News, March 27, 1961, pp. 37-40.

The pattern takes shape

The pattern became somewhat clearer in early March, 1961, as top defense leaders testified as to their plans at the "Military Posture Briefings" before the House Armed Services Committee. The statement of Admiral Arleigh Burke, the Chief of Naval Operations, was among the most comprehensive in outlining the prevailing strategic thought.

> The probability of general war, though finite, has . . . become remote. But deterrence of a general war has not, and will not deter other forms of Communist aggression. Within this framework of standoff, limited aggressions, far from being less likely, are becoming more probable. The Communists are willing to take chances on nibbling and piecemeal aggressions under the expectation that we will not risk conflict which might escalate to major proportions. We have seen this in the past in Korea and Viet Nam. We are seeing it today in Laos and in the Congo. These pressures, probings, and limited conflicts will continue. To deter limited war successfully we must show that we have the will and the ability to make local wars unattractive and unprofitable to the Communists. . . . Limited war is not a half war or second rate war. It will be won by the side which uses the best weapons effectively from the outset, and uses them in winning numbers and combinations.
>
> The way to win is to press in, to get close to the enemy, to carry the war to him. This means moving across the seas, fighting our way in and fighting to stay there. . . .
>
> Limited wars in particular do not lend themselves to precise planning. They may be precipitated in an almost infinite variety of forms, sizes, places and times. This unpredictability imposes a mandatory flexibility of planning, of forces, of weapons, in order to avoid being trapped in a rigid posture, unable to react quickly and forcefully to a threat of new proportions.[39]

General Thomas D. White, Air Force Chief of Staff, spoke of the organization of a Composite Air Strike Force (CASF), within the Tactical Air Command (TAC). This unit, he declared, was

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[39] House, Posture Briefings, 1961, p. 838.

"especially trained, organized and equipped for quick deployment to overseas areas in support of air, ground, or naval operations." Continuing on to the airlift problem, he stated:

> . . . the current lack of modern airlift aircraft would not allow us to support our combat forces at the speed and rate that would be required in certain types of emergencies.
>
> To meet the strategic airlift needs of all the services, including the specialized requirement for rapid deployment of army troops and equipment to overseas areas, our total airlift capacity must be improved.[40]

General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, contributed to the general atmosphere of limited war resurgence by speaking out strongly for an additional ATAC division for the Army.[41]

By mid-March the shift in emphasis in our defense posture was plain to see. The Eisenhower new look had been quite obviously repudiated and reversed. The Army was being increased from 870,000 men to 925,000. Modernized equipment was being procured in ever-greater quantity, with the emphasis on non-nuclear weapons and high-mobility carriers, air and surface.[42] There were repeated hints that Secretary McNamara intended to combine ATAC and TAC, so as to rectify two important limited war weaknesses--inadequate

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[40] Ibid., pp. 1083-84.

[41] Ibid., pp. 640-41.

[42] U. S. News, March 27, 1961, p. 48. Particular emphasis was being placed upon the development of a tri-service, low-cost, STOL aircraft, to replace the more-costly, service-specialized fighter and attack aircraft in use. In addition, the Army stepped up the tempo of work in many neglected fields, such as battlefield electronic identification systems, warning systems for new nuclear bursts, biological and chemical warfare concoctions, equipment preservatives, etc. See Louis Fraar, Wall Street Journal, March 24, 1961, p. 21.

tactical airlift and poor close air support of ground forces.[43] This would be a step similar to the formation of the "Tactical Command" recommended by the Lexington Plan, except for the important difference that this would be administratively accomplished, thus avoiding the difficult Congressional fight. It was obvious that in spite of strong Air Force opposition, the Kennedy administration was adopting the Army-Navy view of limited war, with full recognition of the danger of the use of tactical nuclear weapons.[44]

A vital catalyst in precipitating this revolutionary shift of strategy, was the steadily deteriorating situation in Laos, which approached a crisis in March and April, 1961. So it became clear that only increased military assistance from the United States could prevent a communist takeover, President Kennedy examined the possibility of direct American intervention. He was shocked and alarmed to discover that any significant effort whatsoever would involve the use of nuclear weapons. Since he was determined not to initiate their use, the impotent position in which he was left strengthened his resolve to abandon the tea look.[45]

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[43] Louis Kraar, ibid., March 24, 1961, pp. 1, 18.

[44] The Air Force was particularly unhappy over a Pentagon-ordered reappraisal of the need for continuing production of the Republic F-105 jet fighter, "in light of the proposed reorientation of T.A.C.'s mission with less emphasis on nuclear weapons delivery." Louis Kraar, ibid., March 24, 1961, p. 1.

[45] Charles J. V. Murphy, "Cuba: The Record Set Straight," Fortune, LXIV, No. 3 (September, 1961), 92-97ff. See also Joseph Alsop's column, New York Herald Tribune, August 2, 1961, p. 16. For the text of five official statements on Laos, see State Department Bulletin, April 17, 1961, pp. 547-46.

The Defense Budget Message

The next major milestone on the road to a complete strategy reversal was the President's message to Congress on the defense budget, delivered on March 28, 1961.[46] It was designed to chart "a fresh, clear course for our security," and encompassed a veritable blueprint for a versatile limited war strategy, covering a wide variety of politico-military subjects.

In emphasizing the importance of limited war, the Chief Executive declared: "The free world's security can be endangered not only by a nuclear attack, but also by being nibbled away at the periphery, regardless of our strategic power, by forces of subversion, infiltration, intimidation, indirect or nonovert aggression, internal revolution, diplomatic blackmail, guerrilla warfare or a series of limited wars." He stressed the necessity of cooperative efforts, bolstered by military assistance, to counter these threats. To meet our own limited war commitments, he proposed a detailed five-point program. First, it encompassed a strengthened capacity to meet guerrilla warfare, subversion, and insurrection. Second, it expanded research on non-nuclear weapons. Third, it further increased the flexibility of conventional forces, adding still more airlift and procuring even greater quantities of weapons and equipment. Fourth, it improved the non-nuclear capacities of fighter aircraft. Finally, it added men and money to conventional forces, for strength and greater readiness. The net increases amounted to about $2 billion.[47]

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[46] See New York Times, March 29, 1961, pp. 16-17, for the text of the message. This is the source for the material in the next three paragraphs, except where otherwise indicated.

[47] See Larry Booda, "Kennedy Stresses Cold Rockets, Limited War Forces," Aviation Week, April 3, 1961, pp. 26-27, for a discussion of the detailed budgetary breakdown.

The President had much to say concerning limited war controls. He maintained that our military posture must be flexible enough to be consistent with our efforts at arms limitations. He emphasized the importance of communications channels between nations, both to prevent a miscalculation of our intentions to resist, and to minimize escalation dangers when actually engaged. Finally, in a most-significant passage, he made a firm statement of Presidential control of all aspects of the limiting process.

> Our arms must be subject to ultimate civilian control and command at all times, in war as well as in peace. The basic decisions on our participation in any conflict and our response to any threat--including all decisions relating to the use of nuclear weapons, or the escalation of a small war into a large one--will be made by the regularly constituted civilian authorities.[46]

A few days after President Kennedy's defense message, the Senate Armed Services Committee began its annual military procurement hearings. Secretary McNamara's elaboration of the new policy here gives eloquent testimony to the full magnitude of the shift that had taken place.

> [Limited war] may range from guerrilla and subversive activities involving small scattered bands of men to organized aggression involving sizeable regular military forces. Our limited war forces should be properly deployed, properly trained, and properly equipped to deal with the entire spectrum of such actions; and they should have the means to move quickly to wherever they may be needed on very short

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[46] President Kennedy reiterated and re-emphasized this control theme two weeks later: "We have found a serious need for a sensitive and flexible control of all arms, and especially over nuclear weapons. . . . [Our military forces will] operate at all times under continuous, responsible command and control, from the highest authorities all the way downward, and we mean to see that this control is exercised before, during and after any initiation of hostilities against our forces and at any level of escalation." New York Times, April 11, 1961, p. 3.

> notice. The ability to respond promptly to limited aggressions, possibly in more than one place at the same time, can serve both to deter them and to prevent them from spreading out into larger conflicts.
> . . . .
> . . . the decision to employ tactical nuclear weapons in limited conflicts should not be forced upon us simply because we have no other means to cope with them. There are many situations in which it would not be advisable or feasible to use such weapons. What is being proposed at this time is . . . an increase in our non-nuclear capabilities to provide a greater degree of versatility to our limited war forces.[49]

Summary of first moves

By late April, the new defense trend had become well established. Speaking at an Associated Press luncheon in New York on April 24, 1961, Secretary McNamara clearly acknowledged it. "The changes that we have recommended to the Congress are not minor. They call for major shifts in the pattern of defense spending." He warned that future changes, even major ones, would be made if warranted, and emphasized that the President believed that "our defense program must not be constructed within arbitrary budget ceilings." Summarizing a major aspect of the trend, he declared:

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[49] Senate, Procurement Hearings, 1962, pp. 16-17. In his testimony the Secretary also provided detailed blueprints and cost accounting for the various program increases in the expanded fiscal year 1962 defense budget. See pp. 17-21. In the limited war field, in addition to the $172 million for the 59-plane airlift step-up, were the following eight sub-items: $290 million for procurement of conventional weapons, equipment, and ammunition; $84 million for ship overhaul and modernization; $40 million for an amphibious transport ship (LPD); $27 million for modification of the F-105 fighter to handle conventional weapons; $45 million for the development of a tri-service, VTOL fighter; $65 million for readiness exercises; $99 million for Army and Marine Corps strength increases; and $185 million for research and development on non-nuclear weapons.

> We have moved to strengthen our non-nuclear limited war forces. This move does not modify existing national policy to employ nuclear weapons when necessary to do so. Rather it is designed to avoid situations in which we might be forced to use nuclear weapons because too narrow a range of non-nuclear weapons were available to us.[50]

In spite of these clear indications, the broad change of direction of the new policy did not attract nearly as much attention as did specific program modifications, such as the cutback in B-70 development. The basic shift was perceived, however, by a number of people. Gerard C. Smith described the quintessence of the new strategy as one of an invulnerable deterrent plus non-nuclear defense for non-nuclear aggression. He identified three strategic assumptions that had been changed. First, the idea that any substantial US-USSR conflict would trigger thermonuclear war was now softened to admit the possibility of limited hostilities. Second, the theory that American strategic forces could deter limited as well as total war was abandoned. Third, the policy that our main reliance in any kind of war should be on nuclear arms was phased into a balanced nuclear-conventional policy.[51]

In the background of the Administration's acceptance of the limited war idea, William Henry Chamberlin saw an ideological shift in foreign policy, to the point where there was now "a tendency to treat the struggle with the Soviet Union more as a conflict of great power interests, less as a moral crusade."[52]

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[50] Robert S. McNamara, "National Defense Policies," Vital Speeches of the Day, May 15, 1961, p. 452.

[51] Gerard C. Smith, "A Fresh, Clear Course," America, August 5, 1961, p. 587.

[52] William Henry Chamberlin, "Foreign Policy," Wall Street Journal, April 11, 1961, p. 16.

Morton H. Halperin declared:

> The Kennedy administration has instituted important changes in military strategy which are likely to have a crucial effect on the nation's future. . . . The most decisive Presidential effort has been in the field of limited war. . . . President Kennedy personally ordered the Pentagon to deal with limited war as a separate strategic problem requiring the development of a capability and doctrine, the procurement of additional air and sea lift capability, and increased training for unconventional guerrilla warfare.[53]

He analyzed the reasons for the conventional shift as being the adverse political effects of a nuclear strategy on allies and neutrals, escalation dangers, and the realization that use of nuclear weapons would not necessarily favor the West.

In spite of the new tendencies in defense policy, the Army was not happy in the spring of 1961. Manpower increments, it was felt, were too small. Still more money for modernization was needed, and actual delivery of new equipment was too slow.[54] It had been apparent throughout the early months of the Kennedy Administration that the Army, seeing victory near at hand in its long-fought battle for recognition of limited war, was now shifting its target and embarking on a broader struggle. If successful, this new effort would raise the Army to the position of primacy on the new frontier that the Air Force had enjoyed under the new look. During the posture hearings, both Secretary of the Army Elvis J. Stahr and Chief of Staff General George H. Decker played down limited war and emphasized the Army's role in all-out war, anti-air defense of the United States, and civil defense.

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[53] Morton H. Halperin, "Defense on the New Frontier," The New Republic, August 7, 1961, p. 17.

[54] Hanson W. Baldwin, New York Times, April 18, 1961, p. 13.

Their testimony is replete with references to the Army's function in "any kind of war," "all forms of war," "all types of war," etc.[55] Lieutenant General Arthur G. Trudeau, Chief of Army Research and Development, had, a year earlier, expressed the philosophy behind this strategic concept:

> . . . nuclear weapons . . . have not invalidated the historic concept of man as the ultimate weapon. . . . Let me make one point clear. If our concept of deterrence fails and if general war does come with all that it embraces--the use of mass destruction weapons--the final decision will not be reached in a matter of days. After both sides have delivered nuclear attacks and counterattacks, the conflict will still go on with the remaining fighting forces and the surviving population.
>
> The Soviets subscribe to this view, because in all their military doctrine appears the central theme that "a nation can survive a thermonuclear attack and fight on to victory." We, too, must accept this view.[56]

One reason for the change in emphasis was obvious. The Bureau of the Budget, in a move reminiscent of the Radford-Wilson proposals, had seized upon the oft-repeated Army contentions that limited war is separate from nuclear war (and requires separate weapons) to argue that the Army be stripped of its total war missions and capabilities.[57] This idea never had any significant strength, but it is typical of the New Look, even in its waning days. A more recent danger, though, was what seemed to the Army to be an overconcentration on paramilitary operations and guerrilla warfare.[58]

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[55] See, e.g., House, Posture Briefings, 1961, pp. 663-64.

[56] Quoted in William V. Kennedy, "Limited War Backfires," America, May 7, 1960, p. 209.

[57] Ibid.

[58] The next main section of this chapter develops this tendency toward sublimited war. See New York Times, May 21, 1961, p. 9, for a discussion of Army fears.

the Army buildup occasioned by the Berlin crisis, however, stilled most of the apprehensions.

A final point should be mentioned in summary of the first moves of the Kennedy Administration. The new conventional strategy was exported to NATO almost immediately, "shield" functions began to be expanded to include extended non-nuclear resistance to a conventional attack. European nations had been becoming steadily more disenchanted with an all-nuclear strategy that meant the end of their world in even a limited European war, so the new seed flourished abroad, and lent support to its acceptance at home.[59]

Guerrilla Warfare

One of the hallmarks of the New Frontier has been the attention given to various forms of sublimited war. Accordingly, a brief examination of this aspect of limited war strategy should be made before proceeding to broader issues.

On assuming office, President Kennedy faced four major crises--Cuba, the Congo, Laos, and South Vietnam. All were caused by international communism breaching cold war truce lines. All contained a guerrilla element, as well as the usual other trademarks of sublimited war--incitement, subversion, assassination, arms shipments, covert aid, riots, etc. The fertile ground provided for this form of struggle by the unsettled political, social, and economic conditions of the underdeveloped countries of the world, as well as Khrushchev's expressed intention of exploiting them to

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[59] For a detailed treatment of the evolution of this point, see the author's "Limited War in NATO Strategy" (unpublished term paper for Professor Anthony H. Hokel's Political Science 253 course, Stanford University, 1961), pp. 26-37.

the utmost, indicated that the future would produce an intensification and expansion of this unconventional conflict. It was obvious that regular forces could do little to meet the challenge effectively. Years of experience had shown that some ten to twenty soldiers were required to control one guerrilla in an organized operation.[60] It was also obvious that the primary responsibility for countering this type of sublimited war in an underdeveloped area could not rest with Americans. History had conclusively proved that outsiders could not operate effectively against guerrillas. The truth of Mao Tse-tung's famous precept that guerrillas must move among the people as fish move in water was well recognized. Based on this evaluation, President Kennedy embarked on an unconventional war step-up almost as soon as he took office.

There existed within the Army an organization of some 1000 men termed the "Special Forces," whose responsibility it was to organize guerrilla activity inside enemy lines. It had received little emphasis during the years of the new look, and had appeared something of a strategic anachronism against that background. Now it became the focal point of the guerrilla buildup. An immediate increase of 500 men was ordered, and training became action-oriented. While official doctrine emphasized the use of these troops in declared wars, much unofficial stress was laid (by officers actually involved) on the more difficult and dangerous use of the Special Forces in the cold war, behind the lines of

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[60] For an authoritative account of the Kennedy Administration's view of the guerrilla challenge, see W. W. Rostow, "Countering Guerrilla Warfare," New Leader, July 31-August 7, 1961, pp. 12-14.

countries with whom the United States is not at war. Louis Kraar quotes the Army's Colonel Edwards as saying: "Never before in peacetime have we tried to utilize the tremendous dissident forces always present in police states around the world."[61] In addition to training Army personnel, Special Forces also provided instruction to "civilian employees of the government"--presumably agents of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)--and allied officers.

The pattern of Special Force operations involved the employment of twelve-man Army teams to organize, train, and lead some 1500 native guerrillas, divided into groups of thirty to fifty.[62] Language skills, quite naturally, were strongly emphasized, and all men were paratroop-qualified. Training stressed destruction more than killing--convoy ambushes, disruption of communications, supply line raids, strikes, riots, terror, sabotage, etc.

Efforts to increase the public awareness of the new program began almost immediately. In his Defense budget message in March the Chief Executive said: "Non-nuclear wars and sublimited or guerrilla warfare have since 1945 constituted the most active and constant threat to free world security."[63] After the abortive

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[61] Louis Kraar, Wall Street Journal, February 27, 1961, pp. 1, 12.

[62] A standard Special Forces team includes two officers, two medical specialists, an operations sergeant, an intelligence sergeant, a light weapons man, a heavy weapons man, two radio operators, and two demolition specialists. Versatility is emphasized, with each man having three skills in addition to his speciality. Ibid.

[63] See Neal Stanford, "U. S. Prepares for Guerrilla Wars," Foreign Policy Bulletin, June 1, 1961, p. 139, for a discussion of the administration's early actions regarding paramilitary operations, including the publicity aspects thereof.

Cuban invasion in April, 1961, had spotlighted unconventional warfare for the American public, the Administration increased its public stress on this form of conflict. President Kennedy declared:

> Too long we have fixed our eyes on traditional military needs, on armies prepared to cross borders, on missiles poised for flight. . . . We intend to reexamine and reorient our forces, our tactics, and our intentions . . . for a struggle in many ways more difficult than war.[64]

To review the broad field of intelligence activities and unconventional warfare operations, in the light of the Cuba fiasco, the President assigned a small board of experts headed by General Taylor.[65] The report of this group, delivered in early June, has not been made public, but it is known that in general outline it followed the already-started trend of leaving intelligence and undercover covert operations under the CIA's authority, while recommending that larger-scale paramilitary actions be placed under the control of the Department of Defense.[66]

By the end of April the buildup had reached the point where Secretary McNamara was able to report that "a 150 per cent increase in the size of our anti-guerrilla forces" had been proposed to Congress.[67]

As public awareness of the trend to unconventional warfare grew, an active debate arose, in which all shades of opinion were

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[64] Speech before American Society of Newspaper Editors. New York Times, April 24, 1961, p. 8.

[65] Ibid., April 25, 1961, p. 1, and April 28, 1961, p. 1.

[66] Ibid., May 31, 1961, p. 1, and June 5, 1961, p. 6.

[67] Vital Speeches of the Day, May 15, 1961, p. 452.

represented. Because of relatively strong bipartisan support for guerrilla reinforcement, however, it never became a major public issue. The opposition was divided into two groups--those who objected on moral grounds, and those who doubted the practical effectiveness of guerrilla action by the United States.

The moralists, who were the weaker of the two groups, felt that for a free society--which championed democratic principles, the rule of law, and honor in international relations--to support, in President Kennedy's words "guerrillas striking by night, assassins striking alone, subversives and saboteurs and insurrectionists," would be to forfeit our claim to the principles we hold most dear.[68] They pointed to the world reaction to our part in the Cuban affair, and asserted that future guerrilla operations would alienate allies and neutrals more than would direct military action, because of the concomitant violation of treaties and flouting of international law.[69] They further argued that such actions would damage our own society, our principles, and even our government, by bypassing such normal checks and balances as the right of the Senate to advise on foreign policy and the right of Congress to declare war.

Those objecting on practical grounds maintained that this would be a retrogressive step to a level of conflict in which the Communists were years ahead of us. "It is a little like a wrestling champion playing jacks," charged Nation magazine.[70] These critics,

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[68] See, e.g., the editorial in The Los Angeles Republic, June 5, 1961, p. 2.

[69] See, e.g., Jerry Cavanaugh, "Undercover Warfare," Wall Street Journal, May 16, 1961, p. 18.

[70] Nation, May 27, 1961, p. 450.

too, pointed to Cuba, as evidence that we are not adept enough at the fine points of the game to engage in it seriously. They saw the "paramilitary gap" as dwarfing the missile gap, and pointed out the fact that the communists' police state regimes could counter guerrilla tactics much better than we could. Some saw a big chance of precipitating a general war. Others doubted that we could find the people to engage in such difficult, exacting, and dangerous work successfully. Still others argued, quite persuasively, that our lowered international stature would make us immensely more vulnerable to plots, assassinations, and forgeries--carried out by the communists in sensitive areas and blamed, convincingly, on us.

Both the moral and the practical objectors, however, were outmatched by the proponents of paramilitary action. The game itself, its supporters maintained, was only a new term for an old American method of fighting, dating back to Francis Marion at the battle of Cowpens in the Revolutionary war, and to the Indian wars before that. They argued that it was a case of necessity--either fight fire with fire or go on losing. They felt the communists were vulnerable to guerrilla operations, conducted primarily by American-trained allied troops and communist refugees behind the lines in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, and even in neutral countries that had an active communist party.

By May, 1961, the Administration's guerrilla program was in high gear. Congress had been given plans to increase special forces to 4,000 by June, 1962. A guerrilla training school for Latin American military men was being set up at the Army's Jungle Warfare Training Center in the Canal Zone.[71] Military research specialists

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[71]Louis Kraar, Wall Street Journal, May 24, 1961, p. 16.

were moving into Southeast Asia and the Mid- East to learn the arts needed to combat communist guerrillas.[72] The stress at this time was being placed upon anti-guerrilla warfare--defensive operations[73] --as well as upon peaceful acts in the neutrals (bridge building, medical assistance, etc.) which might raise good will for future paramilitary operations.

After these intensive first efforts to make up for lost time, American paramilitary strength was increased proportionately with other military elements throughout the summer and fall of 1961.

Consolidation of the New Pattern

After the first violent surge which broke the old outline of military strategy and formed the pattern of the "conventional option,"[74] and before the concentrated buildup occasioned by the Berlin crisis, there existed a two- or three-month period in which the new pattern was consolidated and more clearly defined.

One of the steps which most lucidly spotlighted the two trends of limited war predominance and functional organization was the merger, in late May, of two offices specializing in the development of limited war weapons. The offices of the Assistant Directors for Naval Weapons and for Tactical Weapons combined to become the Office of the Assistant Director for Limited War Systems.

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[72] New York Times, June 10, 1961, p. 5.

[73] For an excellent discussion of counter-guerrilla tactics, see the article by Roger Hilsman, Director of Intelligence and Research in the State Department, ibid., August 11, 1961, p. 5.

[74] A term used by the McNamara team. See Stewart Alsop, "Master of the Pentagon," Saturday Evening Post, August 5, 1961, p. 45.

charged with the development of weapons used in guerrilla and anti-guerrilla war, new combat, anti-submarine warfare, fleet air defense, and amphibious and land combat.[75]

Setting the keynote for this consolidation phase of defense development was the President's Second State of the Union message, delivered to a Joint Session of Congress on May 25, 1961. Here he announced:

> . . . I have directed a further reinforcement of our own capacity to deter or resist non-nuclear aggression. In the conventional field, with one exception, I find no present need for large new levies of men. What is needed is rather a change of position to give us still further increases in flexibility.[76]

To implement this, President Kennedy advocated a six-point program, encompassing: first, a reorganization and modernization of the Army's divisional structure to improve its non-nuclear firepower, tactical mobility, flexibility, and mechanization; second, more and better equipment for this new army; third, an increase in non-nuclear capability and a further augmentation of the Special Forces; fourth, a new plan for the speedier deployment of Army reserve forces; fifth, a Marine Corps expansion to 190,000 men; and finally, better intelligence coordination. Added to the Administration's original program, this new plan made quite an impressive defense increase.

The expansion could not be instantaneous, however, and harmony did not reign supreme in the nation's top councils. The Army still did not have its own airlift--a very sore point. Nor

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[75] New York Times, May 24, 1961, p. 27.

[76] Ibid., May 26, 1961, pp. 12-13. See also "Text: Program for U. S.," U. S. News, June 5, 1961, pp. 76-81.

equipment was still only trickling in, and there was violent debate over the various Army plans to return to the old triangular division (now to be 15,000 strong) from the pentomic, or to go to a "task force" concept, with "building blocks" of infantry, tank, air, engineer, supply, etc., units, to be combined as needed.[77] Dissention was not confined to the Army. A split developed between civilians and military, with many of the latter regarding the "woolly-headed scientists and white house intellectuals" contemptuously, and charging that they would emasculate American potential for any conflict beyond limited war.[78] Overshadowing the other controversies, however, and contributing to all of them, was the problem of money. With every step away from the new look vast sums had been spent or obligated, and the end seemed nowhere in sight. In spite of stiffening resistance to further budgetary inroads, there seemed no satisfactory alternative to the course being followed.[79]

To still the critics who foresaw disaster in a military engagement with conventional weapons only, Deputy Secretary Gilpatric proclaimed that tactical nuclear weapons would be used on military targets if needed, even if the enemy didn't initiate

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[77] See, e.g., "'Little Wars': How ready is the U. S.?" (interview with General George H. Decker, Army's Chief of Staff), U.S.N.W.R., May 29, 1961, pp. 64-71; New York Times, May 26, 1961, p. 1; and "New U. S. Army changing tactics and equipment," Palo Alto Times, July 8, 1961, p. 13.

[78] Newsweek, May 29, 1961, pp. 24-25.

[79] See James Reston, New York Times, May 14, 1961, part iv, p. 10.

their use.[80] At this time also the neutron bomb debate was raging, with its advocates claiming that this device, if developed, would be the perfect battlefield weapon, which would resolve the controversy over tactical nuclear weapons.[81]

A final development of major military significance in this period was the appointment on June 26, 1961, of General Taylor to be "military representative of the President," a position without precedent.[82] It indicated clearly how closely the Kennedy philosophy approached that of this outspoken advocate of limited war preparedness. While there was some apprehension over a possible downgrading of Pentagon influence through the statutory channels of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a more likely outcome of this appointment was seen to be better staff work in the White House and improved coordination of military matters with other aspects of foreign policy.[83] The greatest significance of the appointment, however, lay in the close tie now established between defense policy on the new frontier and the well-known Taylor views favoring dual capability for military forces, functional organization,

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[80] "Official Word: U. S. Will Use Nuclear Weapons If--," U. S. News, June 19, 1961, p. 57.

[81] This theoretically possible device would substitute a high-explosive trigger for the current fission trigger used in hydrogen weapons, thus killing by neutron beams, not heat or blast, and eliminating radioactive fallout. A true "death ray," it could be used with discrimination in limited war, destroying military forces and leaving material intact. See New York Times, June 25, 1961, pp. 1, 31.

[82] Ibid., June 27, 1961, p. 13.

[83] "Big Change at the White House," U. S. News, August 7, 1961, p. 34; and Benson T. Seidlin, New York Times, July 6, 1961, p. 10.

the recognition of the possibility of limited war in Europe, broad military planning coordination, and an appreciation of the indispensable role of ground troops.[84]

The Berlin Buildup

With the deepening of the Berlin crisis in July, 1961, and Khrushchev's announcement of the suspension of his previously announced military reductions and his announcement of a massive buildup, the Administration's defense policy entered a new phase. The tension produced by the worsening cold war situation resulted in an urgent review of American and allied defense efforts.[85] Throughout the next several weeks, fragments of possible plans, from full mobilization on down, filtered through to the press in great profusion.[86] Since Dean Acheson had been charged by the President with making the basic augmentation recommendation, those familiar with his views expected an acceleration of the conventional buildup--and this is largely what was unveiled when, after the decision had been reached at the highest levels, the President made his July 25, 1961, radio-television address to the nation on proposed action.[87]

His program amounted to a significant reinforcement of the previous trend. "The threat is worldwide," declared the President.

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[84] See Hanson W. Baldwin, ibid., July 2, 1961, part iv, p. 5.

[85] James Reston termed this "the most serious re-examination of Allied strategic plans since the massive retaliation doctrine of John Foster Dulles in 1954." Ibid., June 28, 1961, p. 34.

[86] See, e.g., ibid., July 11, 1961, pp. 1, 3; and Joseph Alsop, New York Herald Tribune, July 3, 1961, p. 12.

[87] New York Times, July 26, 1961, p. 10. This is the source for the subsequent excerpts from the address.

"Our effort must be equally wide and strong, and not obsessed by any single manufactured crisis." Citing his previous March and May defense budget increases (which had amounted to about $3 billion), he declared:

> These measures must be speeded up and still others must be taken. We must have a sea and airlift capable of moving our forces quickly and in large numbers to any part of the world.
>
> But even more importantly we need the capability of placing in any critical area at the appropriate time a force which, combined with those of our allies, is large enough to make clear our determination and ability to defend our rights at all costs--and to meet all levels of aggression or pressure with whatever levels of force are required. We intend to have a wider choice than humiliation or all-out nuclear action. I must emphasize again that the choice is not merely between resistance and retreat, between atomic holocaust and surrender. Our peacetime military posture is traditionally defensive; but our diplomatic posture need not be.

It was apparent that Berlin gave the President a chance to do what he felt needed to be done, and that he intended to exercise vigorous leadership by taking full advantage of an aroused public opinion. Avoiding mobilization for the present (but with the warning that he would not hesitate to take whatever future steps might be required) he outlined six steps for immediate implementation, all of which gave strong material support to his strategy of the conventional option. First was a request for an additional $3 billion for the fiscal year 1962 budget. The Kennedy increases now stood at over $6 billion, and the total defense budget at about $47.5 billion, an unprecedented peacetime high. The second point increased the Army's strength to a total of one million. Third and significant Navy and Air Force manpower boosts, of 29,000 and 63,000, respectively. The fourth step doubled and tripled draft calls, asked for authority to order some reserves

to active duty, and announced intentions to call up some Air National Guard squadrons. Fifth was the retention in active service of many ships and aircraft scheduled for deactivation. The final point was a further huge step-up, of almost $2 billion (within the above total increase) for conventional weapons, equipment, and ammunition.[88]

The buildup of the armed forces that resulted from these new moves followed the "Department of Defense Plan," not a White House plan or the uncoordinated plans of the services themselves.[89] It was designed to produce a balanced posture, which supplemented a powerful, invulnerable nuclear striking force and strong tactical atomic capability with massive conventional might. The planned increases would provide three additional combat divisions by so strengthening the three training divisions that they could be placed on the line. Sealift capability would be increased by one-third, until it could handle two complete Marine divisions. The Air Force was to be augmented by thirty-seven fighter or transport squadrons. The entire buildup was concentrated on the conventional/limited-war end of the spectrum, to compensate for the previous pro-nuclear imbalance.

Within twenty-four hours after the President's speech, Secretary McNamara presented the $3 billion appropriation request to Congress, where it won immediate bipartisan support.[90] Public

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[88] For a discussion of these points see "Kennedy Sets a New Course for U. S.," U. S. News, August 7, 1961, pp. 29-32.

[89] "Better Balance: Goal Now for U. S. Forces," Ibid., August 14, 1961, p. 47.

[90] New York Times, July 27, 1961, pp. 1, 8.

support, likewise, was overwhelming. Little thought seemed to be given to the difficult days in the future, when the international crises had temporarily cooled and the taxpayer and his Congressman and Senator had sober second thoughts about a defense budget approaching the $50 billion level.[91]

As the Berlin buildup progressed and the NATO allies reworked posture and strategy toward the goal of withstanding a massive conventional assault with a non-nuclear response for thirty to sixty days before having to fall back on atomic weapons, a number of limited war developments took place, some of which were dissociated from the immediate problem.

Operating to date in the theoretical sphere, military planners appeared to be now readying for actual trial a proposed last-resort agreement to avoid nuclear attacks on cities and population centers in a future war.[92]

It was in this background also that the revolutionary "program packaging" concept was introduced. Developed by Defense Comptroller Hitch, and approved by Secretary McNamara, this technique would budget not by service but by "package," a term for the seven to nine categories of the defense of the future. In this system, limited war forces would be included in the "General Purpose Forces" package, and money would be allotted to the package, to be further subdivided by weapons system. While still in embryonic

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[91] For a discussion of this point see Jerry Greene, "Return to the Foot Soldier," Nation, August 12, 1961, pp. 71-72.

[92] New York Times, July 15, 1961, pp. 1, 2.

stage, this most recent development of the functional trend promised drastically to transform limited war planning.[93]

The problem of control of nuclear weapons again arose, as their possible use in crisis was actively considered. Air Force advocates had backed off somewhat from their previous position in favor of almost automatic nuclear weapon response in any conflict, but they wanted "to be certain that the use of such weapons is not ruled out for political reasons if the military situation requires them."[94] This view was still emphatically rejected by the administration. In the words of Assistant Secretary Nitze, ". . . we are examining with care the problem--organizational and technical--of command and control of nuclear weapons to assure that the decision to use such weapons can be responsibly exercised under the authority of the President and to minimize the risks of triggering war by accident or miscalculation."[95]

In late September another major limited war issue arose and was cleared away--the question of the determination of the Administration to use nuclear weapons if necessary. Early in the month, in a most remarkable speech, Assistant Secretary Nitze had declared, inter alia:

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[93]Joseph Turner, "New Categories for War," Science, August 18, 1961, p. 439; and Harry S. White and Robert J. Massey, "Program Packaging--Opportunity and Peril," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXVII, No. 12 (December, 1961), 28-35. For general background information see Charles J. Hitch and Roland N. McKean, The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

[94]"What Air Force Thinks," Army-Navy-Air Force Register, September 23, 1961, p. 13.

[95]New York Times, September 8, 1961, p. 2.

> The increases in conventional capability will strengthen, and not weaken, our policy of deterring war. For the ability to commit forces in the intermediate range makes more credible to the U.S.S.R. the certain prospect that we will back up our non-nuclear forces by the use of our strategic capabilities should that be necessary. . . .[96]

In spite of this authoritative statement, two top-level attacks on the conventional emphasis were made on September 21, 1961. General Curtis E. LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff, said that the "sharply defined picture that we presented in the 1950s has become fuzzy to some people." He stated that the buildup of conventional weapons "possibly has" contributed to undermining the credibility of our nuclear deterrent, and he foresaw increased danger of war because of confusion over our readiness to use nuclear weapons.[97] Having even greater impact was a similar charge made by Senator Margaret Chase Smith on the Senate floor. "We have, in effect, played into his [Khrushchev's] hands." The Administration, she declared, "practically told" Khrushchev "we do not have the will to use the one power that can stop him. . . . we have the nuclear capacity, but not the nuclear credibility."[98]

The administration responded quickly and decisively to these challenges, with Senator Symington speaking on the Senate floor and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Secretary McNamara both replying on national television programs. Nuclear weapons would be used if necessary, in the Berlin crisis or elsewhere.[99]

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., September 22, 1961, p. 2.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., September 24, 1961, p. 2, and September 25, 1961, p. 3.

In the final development to be treated in this brief examination of limited war on the new frontier, the Defense Department in September, 1961, began the merger of Strategic Army Corps and the Air Force's Tactical Air Command into the "United States Strike Command," a limited war organization designed around complete ground-air coordination.[19] Headed by an Army General, it gave STRIKE not only its own close air support but also an integral tactical airlift. If there had been any doubts as to the future of the functional concept, they were now dispelled.

As the nation faced year's end, with trouble spots looming around the globe, the new frontier's strategy of the conventional option was being strengthened by the day. The revolution in military policy of the past year had been breathtaking in its thoroughness and speed. The most significant internal problem associated with this strategy--one that was coming ever more to the fore--was the budgetary one. Time alone would tell in which direction the incipient fiscal crises would force the strategic pattern.

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[19] Ibid., September 25, 1961, p. 1, October 2, 1961, p. 34, and October 13, 1961, p. 12.

CHAPTER VI

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Conclusions on Development of Limited War Strategy

It is a thesis of this paper that the development of limited war strategy of the United States, as an aspect of overall military strategy, can be divided into two distinct periods, according to the true applicability of that strategy to the international milieu in which it was employed. The dividing point between these two phases falls in late 1960-early 1961, and can well be regarded as coinciding with the accession of the Kennedy Administration. In generalization, the earlier period, extending from 1945 until 1960, was characterized first by a strategic lag, with new innovations being adopted at about the time they should logically have been phased out; and second by an all-pervasive spirit of budgetary primacy. The current strategy on the other hand, is typified by a pragmatic realism, and features a flexibility and versatility, both in thinking and in posture, which has not previously been present. In terms of limited war, the first phase saw this form of conflict constantly negated, downgraded, or denied, whereas in the second it has been raised to a position of near-primacy in defense planning. The following subsections of this thesis will expand upon the distinctive features of these two periods.

The first fifteen years

The serious lag in military strategy which is evident throughout the postwar decade and a half, and which had such a powerful effect on limited war thinking, could be seen in embryonic stages even before the end of World War II. The spirit of American trust of and cooperation with the Soviet Union, which had been slow in developing in the early stages of the war, persisted for some two years after the end of that conflict, during which time Russian actions were becoming daily more menacing. But if our first error was to delay until 1947 the establishment of the firm position vis-à-vis the communists that we should have adopted in 1945, it was the most understandable of our mistakes, and one that probably had to be made in order to verify the true nature of the Soviet challenge.

When this turning point was finally reached in 1947 with the establishment of the policy of containment, the utility of that policy was undercut by the fact that our military posture was now too weak to enforce it globally. Thus the relatively strong diplomatic position exemplified by containment, which might have been quite effective during the first two postwar years, was adopted just as it should have been either discarded or backed up by a more powerful military establishment.

In the early years the atomic bomb had been regarded primarily as a weapon to be used solely in the defense of the United States in the event of a World War III. The lack of a limited war capability during this period has resulted in severe setbacks to the free world around the globe. Now, in the late 1960s, as the importance of containment in some areas because of military weakness

became obvious, the United States shifted to a more active brandishing of the atomic bomb, as a substitute for the development of a limited war force. Thus again a strategy which might have worked well in the past was adopted--and adopted at the very moment in history when the Soviet acquisition of nuclear weapons ended the monopoly upon which the new strategy was postulated. This communist milestone, which could have been expected to be the cue for an American buildup of conventional forces to backstop the foreseeable nuclear stalemate, actually resulted in a cut in military strength, leaving our limited war capability virtually in shambles on the eve of the nation's third greatest foreign war, which, primarily for political reasons, had to be fought as a limited war.

The pattern continues after the Korean War. Our cold war emphasis shifted to efforts to prevent another Korea at the same time that the communists had largely abandoned overt aggression for more sophisticated forms of war in the sublimited range. Yet in spite of these foreign policy efforts, our military planners paradoxically regarded Korea as a strategic aberration, and drove strategy further away from the limited war end of the spectrum. The limited war thinking that did occur was the embryonic variety that should have begun with the atomic bomb, rather than in the hydrogen age.

Liberation and massive retaliation had been rejected in Korea before they were enunciated by the Eisenhower-Dulles team; and the new look, with its complete reliance on America's nuclear power, continued the lagging trend by becoming established just when the Soviet H-bomb explosion and approaching nuclear parity

practically ended the usefulness that policy might have had earlier.

Throughout the 1950s the one-step-late pattern continued, as can be seen, for example, in our continued emphasis on massive retaliation (albeit in a modified form); in our belated adoption of tactical nuclear weapons, several years after a strategy based upon them could have been decisive, and just when the Russian forced-draft weapons development program had begun producing them; and in our increased emphasis on SAC's strategic retaliatory sword, rather than the limited war shield, at a time when Soviet missile advances suggested that their sword might be longer and sharper than ours.

Partly because of this strategic lag, limited war strategy during the first fifteen years never advanced beyond the most rudimentary level. The Korean war was fought almost completely on an *ad hoc* basis, and as soon as it was over limited war thinking reverted to the near-vacuum that had existed earlier.

There are, however, root causes more basic than the strategic lag which contributed heavily to the formation of a military strategy antithetical to limited war. Some of these even exerted a dual effect by helping to bring about the lag itself.

Among the foremost of these is the traditional American approach to war, discussed in Chapter I, above. Our penchant for divorcing diplomacy from its ultimate basis--force--and for regarding the use of armed might in international relations as a procedure so immoral as to be justified only in the direst straits of self-defense, constituted a powerful anti-limited-war bias deeply imbedded in the mores of the nation. So also did the

attitude of righteous anger in which, when pressed beyond endurance, we would go to war--an attitude which would brook no compromise with the evil forces which drove us to this social aberration and which demanded a total effort to bring about unconditional surrender. In this atmosphere the delicate seeds of the limiting philosophy required for conducting war, and of the compromise philosophy required for ending war, could hardly be expected to flourish.

Related to this traditional approach to war is our dichotomous perception of international relations. Just as we have always seen war and peace as separate and distinct entities, so have we also tended to regard the myriad problems of global cold war confrontation in terms of black and white. Thus the versatile, flexible attitude required of a nation that is to be able to select from the entire power spectrum the means most propitious to secure its national interests was conspicuously lacking.

Contributing also to the weakness of our limited war position was our mistaken conception of the nature of the enemy. Time and again, as has been chronicled in the four preceding chapters, we displayed a profound ignorance of the true character of the communist threat, and in specific classes our ability to read hostile intentions correctly was little better.

Technology itself, which could have been expected to assist in the development of a limited war strategy through more versatile weaponry, actually had the opposite effect. Since the atomic age had dawned with this new force cast in a "city-busting" role, it became thus fixed almost indelibly in the public consciousness, and the "myth of Hiroshima" for many years held back the development of tactical nuclear weapons and the formulation of a strategy for

the discriminating employment of atomic power on the battlefield. It contributed also to the unfortunate "one-weapon" philosophy that, in its greater or lesser manifestations, has hampered the balanced-force concept so vital to limited war, or, for that matter, to any nuclear-age conflict. The Air Force domination of defense that has been a hallmark of the atomic era has quite predictably resulted in the overt and forceful subordination of any strategy but that of air-atomic deterrence and retaliation, the legacy of Douhet.

Of greater importance than all of these, however, has been the budgetary issue. With the single exception of Korea, the fifteen years that followed World War II saw the continual primacy of fiscal considerations in the shaping of national defense. More than any other single cause, the dollar ceiling placed on the defense budget actively prevented the rise of a coherent limited war strategy. Air-atomic advocates, by having first call on the fiscal pie and making their slice so large that nothing usable for the formulation of a companion strategy remained, contributed to the downgrading of limited war efforts. In addition the frequent waving of the budgetary wolves by attempts to pay for defense items through "reprogramming funds," "eliminating waste," or "reorganizing and streamlining the Defense Department to prevent duplication and overlap," diverted attention from basic strategic decisions at critical times.

Augmenting these basic causes of limited war impotence in the first fifteen years were hosts of others, some major, some minor, whose influence has been traced in the preceding chapters. It is most important to recognize, however, that the strategy

confusion that prevailed for a decade and a half and prevented the formulation of a strong limited war strategy resulted primarily from the unforeseeable challenges of a new era. If our policies in retrospect seem ill-advised in many cases, the cause lies in the unfamiliarity of decision-makers with the strange technological and political world into which we were catapulted, and not in duplicity, conspiracy, militancy, stupidity, or political partisanship as is frequently charged by ultraists of right or left.

In assessing the results of our military policy of this period, two points stand out with clarity. First, if we were constantly one step behind the times in developing a true understanding of the optimum military policy to be followed in the nuclear era, Soviet military policy, in many important essentials, seems to have lagged even more.[1] It is a signal mistake to assume that we were outplayed by the Russians in the 1945-1960 cold war. They, too, have had their difficulties in adjusting to atomic-age realities--difficulties which have been compounded by the dogmatic rigidity of military doctrine surviving from Stalin's last years. Thus while, with the benefit of hindsight, room for improvement in American military strategy can be seen, it is an absolute lag, based

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[1] A number of analysts of Soviet military strategy have commented on this lag. See, e.g., Edward L. Katzenbach, Jr., "Soviet Military Development," Current History, XXXIX, No. 231 (November, 1960), 266. Raymond L. Garthoff, however, while recognizing that a number of Soviet shifts have followed Western ones, points to other factors that would refute the "lag" charge. See his Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), pp. 89-90. For a more detailed treatment, including recent trends, see the author's "Soviet Military Strategy, 1961" (unpublished term paper for Professor Jan Triska's Political Science 126 course, Stanford University, 1961).

upon what now appears would have been optimum, not a relative lag derived by comparison with our primary opponents' efforts.

The second major conclusion derived from reviewing the first fifteen years is that if mistakes were made out of military policy, particularly in the limited war field, does not seem to have been all it might have been, nevertheless the nation survived the period with no catastrophic defeats and emerged with a relatively strong global position, which left ample room for future maneuver. Military strategy at the end of the period, while clearly biased against limited war, was nevertheless characterized by a modicum of balance; and forces, equipment, and weapons needed for conventional war were still present in sufficient numbers to allow the strategy revolution of 1961 to begin from a very workable and relatively advanced base level. There is a strong tendency among laymen who attempt military analyses to overconcentrate on purely military issues, and to neglect the fact that in our complex era, national power is constituted of many elements, only one of which involves the preparedness and use of overt force. Thus while the superficial examination of limited war strategy and overall military policy presented in this paper has developed what appears to be incorrect or unwise allocations of national wealth in a number of cases, these must be regarded with the same suspicion as is any contemporary analysis of broad issues. The verdict of history may well justify the actions taken, and may develop that had the nation's economic position been weakened sufficiently to permit a major expansion of the military effort in the first fifteen years, or had our military strategy emphasized limited war instead of

the strategic deterrent, our global power position in 1960 might not have been as favorable as it was.

The conventional option

The Kennedy shift to the strategy of the conventional option in 1961 appears to this writer to be of much greater significance than was any other strategy change of the atomic age. Even the much-heralded adoption of massive retaliation in 1953-1954, which set the pattern for the following eight critical years, does not approach it in stature. For on the new frontier there occurred a true strategy revolution. The conventional option represents a quantum step--the development of our first clear, coherent, nuclear-age strategy. For the first time the lag in our military thought has disappeared. For the first time our military policy has real global applicability--in the grey areas, in Europe, and for continental defense. For the first time the marriage of conventional and atomic weapons has been achieved in a strategy that seeks each to complement, not compete with, the other. For the first time the intricate interrelationship between foreign policy and military strategy seems to be clearly meshed, and realistically attuned to the world power situation.

In view of the significance of this development, it is important to ask why it occurred. The forces that were tending to push military away from the new look philosophy in the mid-1950's were recorded in Chapter IV, above. By that time, more than a decade after the dawn of the atomic age, a true conception of the military uses, and limitations, of this new force was beginning to emerge, and was perceived by informed elites who were not

committed--intellectually, emotionally, politically, professionally, or otherwise--to the old order. The issue was not a significant one with the general public, however, and no strong grass-roots sentiment for an abandonment of massive retaliation appeared. The issue of strategy, therefore, as opposed to the issue of our overall military effort, scarcely appeared in the 1960 campaign, in which the candidates played to the masses, not the elites.

It is interesting to contemplate whether a similar strategy revolution would have occurred in 1961 had Vice President Nixon been victorious at the polls. There were indications that he was breaking with the rigid fiscal primacy of the new look, and that he would have sponsored an increased defense effort, but on balance the degree to which he and many of his principal advisers had assimilated the massive retaliation philosophy makes it doubtful that his election would have presaged a strategy shift of anything like the same magnitude as has occurred. The probable result would have been an expanded new look.

President Kennedy, with no such intellectual commitment to massive retaliation, could and did make drastic changes. Coming into office with a mandate to change defense policy, and surrounded by advisers who had rallied to his cause, increasingly disillusioned by the internal contradictions of President Eisenhower's policy in the age of nuclear parity, the new Chief Executive clearly had only one direction in which to move. Aside from the political and professional forces tending in the direction of the conventional option, the coldly analyzed realities of the global power situation admitted no other course. It would thus be a grave mistake to regard this strategy change as a political maneuver, in the domestic

connotation. From beginning to end it was been activated by the imperatives of the free world's security.

Before proceeding to a contemplation of the future prospects of the conventional option, it is logical to see what it has accomplished--and for such an infant, the total is quite impressive, at least in morale and the psychological areas. While the hardware and manpower changes will not be completed for a year or two, the beneficial effects of the shift were strongly felt from its first enunciation, and have increased steadily since.

In the European area, in less than a year NATO strategy has been lifted from what seemed to many a hopeless deal end, filled with a mass of conflicting inconsistencies, to a rational, possible, hopeful plane. While conventional defense of Europe will not be easy, it at least seems possible, whereas the former guaranteed-nuclear-response strategy spelled doom for the continent whether the war was big or small, whether the West won or lost. The NATO shield had languished in the late 1950s because of the seeming hopelessness of any ground defense in a nuclear war. Now its buildup became a real defense need, offering a chance for meaningful security. Where the nuclear strategy had exerted divisive effects upon NATO governments, the shift to a balanced concept seems to have exerted a powerful stabilizing influence upon the alliance.

In the grey areas, the strategic anachronism of attempting to counter ambiguous threats in underdeveloped areas with massive destruction weapons has been supplanted by a flexible strategy encompassing the entire power spectrum; a strategy whose key element lies in the limited war field--the local opposition of local

aggression. The explosive possibility of a second use of atomic weapons by white nations against non-white, which could presage disaster for future international cooperation, has receded into the background.

Throughout the global arena the gap between our advance declaratory policy and our actual response in crisis has been drastically narrowed. Our conventional expansis has immensely strengthened our moral position and the attractiveness of our strategy to friendly and uncommitted nations, and the onus of initiating the use of nuclear weapons has been largely shifted to the communist powers. With respect to our opponents, the deterrent aspect of our policy has been vastly increased, through the expansion of the possible range of response and its greater credibility.

For the people of our own nation, the reversal of the constantly worsening trend of our power position has inspired a rebirth of confidence, as can be seen daily in such manifestations as the attitude of cool, firm resolve over the Berlin crisis. Our increasing military might and flexibility is steadily strengthening the backstop to our diplomacy, and allowing a more vigorous, powerful emphasis in foreign policy around the world.

But in spite of the favorable initial signs, much remains to be done. The final section of this paper will examine some of the problem areas that loom in the future for the conventional option.

Limited War Strategy in the 1960s

For convenience of discussion, the difficulties that beset the further development of a limited war strategy will be treated

in three sections--those relating to domestic policy, those falling under the head of foreign policy, and finally matters involving military policy. This arrangement is to some extent artificial, and it must be borne in mind that the limited war aspects of these three areas overlap and interact upon each other to a considerable degree.

Limited war and domestic policy

In the area of domestic policy--or the relationship between government and people--as it concerns limited war, the greatest need is for vigorous Presidential leadership. The idea, espoused by some, that our form of government demands that leaders follow the expressed will of the people in all matters, even in those in which the people are poorly informed, could lead to disaster in the nuclear age. It must be made clear that this does not mean leaders should dictate policies opposed by the people, but that the President and his advisers, with comprehensive and privileged information and the best experience available, should decide on the proper courses of action and then embark upon a forceful and dynamic program of education, designed to acquaint the nation with the issues and develop support for their chosen policies. In today's world, more than ever in the past, an Executive who awaits a spontaneous popular debate on limited war issues is doomed to impotence.

As an initial step in the general national educational effort on limited war, it is important that the people not misunderstand the choices available to them. Peace is so timely and earnestly desired, and indications of public misunderstanding of

its prerequisites are so prevalent (e.g., unilateral disarmament rallies, ban-the-bomb drives, nuclear test ban campaigns, etc.) that a clarification of the relationship between peace, military force, and war is urgently needed. The choice is not the simple one between peace and war. The threat to all we hold dear is actual, dangerous, and growing. Our desire for peace will not stay it. Facing this threat, in any specific military confrontation, we have but three choices--surrender, limited military action, or all-out war. Presented in this context, the fact that limited war holds the key to our salvation becomes obvious.

The second educational effort, and a much more extensive one, is in essence an attempt to change the traditional approach of the American public to foreign relations and war. It will be said that this can never succeed. The answer, of course, is that it must succeed or the nation cannot survive. With our background of oceanic isolation during our formative years tending to develop in us a suspicious, distrusting attitude concerning negotiations with foreign powers, Americans are presently ill-equipped mentally or emotionally to take an active part in our era of limited wars. We must overcome our crusading complex, our black-or-white view of all international problems, our penchant for quick, dramatic solutions, and our zealous hatred in battle that demands unconditional surrender. In their places we must develop a rational appreciation of the role of power, military and other, in international relations, and a willingness to use appropriate force when the situation calls for it, without first having undergone a Pearl Harbor. We must learn to be patient in seeking to influence international affairs, and to be able to engage in negotiations

without expecting a unilateral victory. We must learn to be able to fight for limited objectives, and to stop fighting when it is in the national interest.

Finally, the public must be educated to the philosophy of limited war itself; otherwise the dangers are immense. Under present conditions, the "moral escalation" effect of an outraged public opinion in a limited war could well result in physical escalation to the apocalyptic exchange of thermonuclear weapons. If this did not occur, the psychological distaste for this type of military effort could result in the repudiation at the polls of the party in power; and this latter event, coupled with the Democratic party's buster following Korea, could result in a fear of political suicide so strong in both political parties that we could be nibbled to death in the future without accepting ambiguous challenges. A third possible road to disaster opened up by the interplay of limited war and an uninformed public opinion looms in the form of a catastrophic change to our political system. The grave political crisis stirred by the Truman-MacArthur controversy, with its partisan overtones and its partial politicizing of the military, stands as a warning that public education in this field is urgently needed.[2] If these domestic challenges can be met, the nation can advance into the dangerous years to come confident of strong backing at home for limited war.

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[2]For an extended discussion of the topics covered in this paragraph see the author's "Limited War and Partisan Politics," (unpublished, 1961).

Limited war and foreign policy

But a strong and sympathetic public opinion coupled with our present foreign policy, is not enough. Aspects of the latter must change, also, to keep up with the new era.

Many of the public education goals stressed in the domestic policy section above are obviously applicable and necessary in the foreign policy area also. But there are others needed here, in addition. If, as a nation, we are to conduct a vigorous program abroad to further the national interest (and, as we see it, the interests of mankind), we need to drop out of the popularity contest in which we are presently so actively engaged. Americans, as a nation, desire to be popular, to be liked. In the coming era, however, this will turn out to be a luxury we cannot always afford. If, as the leader of the free world, we are to be sure we are exerting strong control over the course of coming events, we must not hesitate to take unpopular actions when needed. This foreign policy philosophy is a prerequisite for an effective limited war strategy. We should unhesitatingly follow a positive course to achieve our goals; and in doing so we cannot help but gain the <u>respect</u> of all the world.

Our intelligence efforts, which in many ways are more vital to effective limited war than to all-out war, must be expanded and improved; and, even more importantly, top decision-makers must have the mental flexibility, versatility, and pragmatism to be ready, willing, and able to seize opportunities, to turn unexpected events to the advantage of the west. Our complete paralysis during the ten days of the free Hungarian government in 1956, and in the early hours of the Berlin wall in August, 1961,

are examples of the need for change. Even forceful, instantaneous, unilateral action must always be regarded as a possibility. The British responses to the two Kuwait threats indicate how effective this type of operation can be. The age of limited war simply does not permit poor intelligence or sluggish reaction.

The recent trend away from ideological overtones in our relations with Soviet Russia and toward the treatment of our oppositional relationship as great-power rivalry is very encouraging. It assists communications, permits easier compromise when in the national interest, and opens the door to what may, in years hence, become the central question of the Twentieth Century--the timing of a realignment of great powers in opposition to the rising might of Communist China.

Limited war in military policy

So closely allied to the topic of "limited war and foreign policy" as almost to defy separation from it is the matter of the place of limited war in overall military policy. It is in this latter area, however, that the most direct and immediately pertinent efforts must take place.

Of supreme importance is our will to engage in limited war if the national interest requires it. Many writers have of late been concerned over this aspect of our national power.[3] The questions of this nature raised in the minds of the students of limited war

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[3] See, e.g., Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, chaps. i, ii, v, vi passim, and The Necessity for Choice, pp. 57-85; and Harvey S. Ross, "Are We Ready to Wage Limited War?" United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXVII, No. 3 (March, 1961), 27-42. This latter work was the winner of the Naval Institute Essay Contest.

have not yet been answered on the new frontier. Certainly it is a sine qua non of an effective power position in the world today, and if we do not have this all our other strengths will avail us little.

If the will is there, though, the next vital concern is to have a coherent limited war strategy to employ should deterrence fail. It was primarily on this count that massive retaliation was found wanting. The importance of well-conceived strategy cannot be overrated. Without it, tremendous material advantages may not be sufficient to prevail. With it, the lessons of history teach that almost any other disadvantage can be overcome. The great failing of the first fifteen years, as has been demonstrated in detail in the preceding chapters, was the non-development of a limited war strategy. All indications on the new frontier point to major progress in this area, but the efforts must not slacken.

The rapidly changing international situation and the increased rate of technological development require constant reappraisals and adjustments of strategy. Some areas of limited war thinking that seem to call for immediate attention deal with the limiting process itself. Not enough is yet understood of the interrelationship between limits on objectives, on geography, and on weapons, and about the effects on the others of an escalation in any of the categories. The expansion of "the bomb" into a continuum of destructive power that conceptually overlaps the high explosives spectrum poses great problems for the military strategist and political decision-maker. The validity of the former quantum step between conventional and nuclear weapons, which has served as a natural limiting point for a decade and a half, is now in serious

question. Our strategy must encompass new "watershed" points, and means for communicating them to the enemy. Such incipient developments as the neutron bullet, and such tactical possibilities as the ice being broken by the initial use of nuclear weapons at sea in future war, indicate the urgency of continuous strategy development.

As American strategy refinements take place, care must be taken not to allow western unity to be damaged by annoyance over what may seem to be slow adoption by allies of the innovations. Considering the sometimes twists United States strategy has followed in the past, it will not be surprising if future modifications are viewed somewhat skeptically abroad at first.

The key precept of an effective limited war strategy must be the prevention of a communist fait accompli. No limited war danger is more to be feared than this. Glenn H. Snyder well describes the peril:

> If the Soviets were to occupy Schleswig-Holstein quickly (which they could easily do if they faced only a flimsy shield), they would then be committed to defend Schleswig-Holstein against a counterattack by NATO forces. The West would then have to bear the psychological burden of initiating substantial conflict, a heavy burden indeed if the only available response were strategic nuclear war, but heavy enough even in a local response. An attempt to eject the invaders might well eventuate in all-out war, since it would require the application of substantial force. If the expected costs were greater than the value of Schleswig-Holstein to the West, the imperatives of honor might not be sufficient to generate a response. The Soviets could be expected to do everything possible to inhibit a response; presumably they would occupy the conquered area in considerable force so as to raise as high as possible the cost of repelling them. They would no doubt proclaim that they had no more territorial ambitions. They would offer to negotiate, and perhaps insist that their occupation would be only temporary. They might threaten to

> increase their commitment of forces and take more territory if NATO attempted to push them back to the original border; such threats might well include a little judicious nuclear blackmail.[4]

The shattering effect such a *fait accompli* would have on the Western alliance is readily apparent. Our limited war strategy must therefore be keyed to instant response and high mobility, and must start from deployed positions.[5] All of these have been stressed by President Kennedy, but their signal importance makes them deserving of repeated emphasis.

The next element of limited war strategy to be discussed also bears accentuation, because of the American post-war predilection for a one-weapon philosophy. If the history of arms has taught any one lesson with finality it is that reliance on one weapon, one branch, one arm of the service is the sure road to disaster. This maxim is even more true today, when the range of possible challenges is immense, and growing daily. Balanced forces, in every respect, are vital to permit an appropriate response to aggression in any form. Even in weaponry balance is essential. An excessive shift to conventional weapons would expose us dangerously to nuclear blackmail. Regression to near-total reliance on nuclear weapons could hamstring the West in countless ways, from not having the weapon for the job to the impossibilities of getting alliance agreement on initiation of the use of nuclear weapons in limited war. An oft-neglected reason for weaponry balance is its advantage in an arms-control situation. Since one eye must

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[4] Snyder, pp. 127-28.

[5] See Anthony A. Wohl, *Weapons in the Nuclear Age* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1961), part vii, for an outline of a possible strategy encompassing these points.

always be kept on the possibility (however remote) of negotiating a satisfactory arms control agreement with the Communists, balanced weaponry will ensure for us a sound remaining military position whatever shape the agreement might take. It would also prevent the Communists from placing us at a psychological disadvantage by vocally proposing an arms control treaty banning or limiting the very weapons upon which our strategy relied. It should be mentioned in this connection that our best hope for the future may lie in actively pressing for an arms control agreement once our limited war strategy and posture is adequate.

Related to the one-weapon issue is the problem that is generally responsible for driving strategy in this direction--the military budget. Defense expenditures are now at an all-time peacetime high, and the trend of the conventional option seems to lead inexorably to higher spending in the future. This will undoubtedly be opposed by a powerful coalition, constantly growing in strength, arguing for radical defense cuts and for an abandonment of this costly balanced strategy. The danger from this source must not be underestimated. There is no magic formula for a cheap, certain defense. The public education effort of the government must concentrate on getting widespread acceptance of the fact that national security cannot be purchased cheaply, and is the best investment we can make.

Moving on to a new topic, our limited war strategy must be a flexible one which does not demand a rigid, categorized response for a given crisis. As the nuclear club expands the likelihood of accidental or subversively-planted atomic explosions

increases exponentially. Hair-trigger, pre-planned responses could play directly into the hands of the enemy.

The military bias against limitations on the use of force in combat must be aggressively attacked through education in nuclear-era strategy.[6] The traditional military position so well enunciated by General MacArthur during the Korean war can no longer be used when the ultimate danger may lie in backing your opponent into a corner where he feels escalation is preferable to a negotiated peace. Touching upon one specific area, the new trend toward functional defense organization should be manipulated so as to blunt the effectiveness of the Air Force's anti-limited-war program.

In the realm of control of nuclear weapons, the Administration has already taken the firm steps noted in Chapter V. More is needed, however. The military must be made genuinely to accept and believe in the idea of political determination of key military matters on the battlefield, including the use of nuclear weapons. This lies at the heart of the limited concept, and concerning it there can be no compromise. This is nothing more than the necessary atomic age extension of our bedrock tenet of civilian control of the military into an area where the uniformed commander has traditionally had near-complete freedom of action. If a true understanding of limited war is given to the military, general acceptance should be rapid.

The final point of this exposition concerns our conduct in conducting a limited war. The well-known maxim that regimes don't

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[6] The work referred to in note 2, *supra*, discusses this point at length.

negotiate over their survival must constantly be borne in mind. Insistence upon total victory may bring disaster as the enemy exercises the veto power, equipped with thermonuclear warheads. A good rule of thumb would seem to be to: (1) establish, announce, and maintain severely limited objectives which would deny the enemy the object of his aggression and, if possible, impose a minor penalty, chiefly for psychological reasons;[7] (2) fight hard, with as low a level of weapons and geographic limitations as possible, to defeat the enemy decisively in terms of the established objectives; and (3) make a generous peace.

The limited war strategy of the United States has come a long way since the dawn of the atomic age in 1945. Although early developments seemed slow and halting, the speed and thoroughness of the 1961 shift to a coherent, up-to-date strategy has compensated for it. If future developments follow the recent pattern, and if the limited war needs indicated in this chapter are met, we need have no fear of America's ability to respond effectively to any level of communist challenge in the 1960s.

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[7] The operation of this "strategy of incremental advantage" in Korea would have seen us continue a strong offensive in 1951 (ignoring the Chinese truce feelers), to the narrow neck of the peninsula, then stop and offer to negotiate, backed by the now-believable threat of a further offensive. And we inflicted such a psychological defeat on the Chinese as would likely have gained Russia's gratitude for cutting an adventurous upstart down to size and eliminating any chance of China's challenging the Soviet Union for equal stature in the bloc.

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